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# **THE INDIAN POLICE**



# THE INDIAN POLICE

BY

J. C. CURRY

WITH A PREFACE BY

THE RT. HON.

LORD LLOYD OF DOLOBRAN

P.C., G.C.I.E., G.C.S.I., D.S.O.

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## PREFACE

**I**N HIS record of the history and of the everyday work of the Indian Police Force, Mr. Curry rightly disclaims any purpose of propaganda. The Indian Police knows no politics. They maintain, in loyal support of the Government they serve, the peace and order without which no political structure can subsist. But a plain statement of facts, honestly and fully set out as in this work, has always implicit in it an element of criticism; and there is here much material demanding consideration at the hands of those who are responsible for the future destinies of India. Here they may find the true picture of the men who for years past have been the objects of obloquy, of insidious attempts at corruption, of social ostracism, of physical violence and assassination, and who through it all, in spite of the discomforts and dangers, have stood firm by their duty and by the discipline that has made them what they are. I speak not of the British officers. Their praise is in the fine temper of the weapon they have forged. And how good that is only those who know the East and the power of the claims of blood and caste and religion can tell. To the self-governing India of the future, the Indian Police Force is not the least of the gifts which Britain has to offer, and it can only augur ill for that future if those who claim to speak of moderation and sane progress fail to realize how much it means to India to have such a weapon made ready to hand, and aid rather than resist the constant attempts to spoil the temper of the steel.

The King's Police Medal may be the D.S.O. or the V.C. of Civil Life. It may be the reward of work calling for the highest qualities of organization, or it may be the reward of deeds of the most daring personal gallantry. In both fields no force in the Empire stands higher than the Indian Police. Mr. Curry might well have been forgiven had he made his

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pages glow with purple passages in praise of the heroic deeds of officers and men. Instead, he has submitted his reports of the brave deeds of his service in the unembellished language of the *Gazette*. And it is better so, for is not the Indian Police, like the Navy, a fighting force always in the firing line, and has not the Navy set the proper precedent for such reports—‘Ships captured—as per margin’? Those men who have so often risked, and too often lost, their lives at the call of duty need no rhetoric.

LLOYD.

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

**T**HIS BOOK is written to describe in outline and to portray, in some small way, in action one of the great organizations achieved under British leadership by the co-operation of British and Indians.

The period 1861-1931 covers a definite phase in the history of the Indian Police. Before 1861 the organization was more or less amorphous. After 1931 it is intended that, with the introduction of Provincial Autonomy, the control and direction of the Provincial Police Forces shall pass from the hands of an authority ultimately responsible to the British Parliament into those of Indian Ministers responsible to the Indian Legislatures.

It is no accident that this great phase was introduced by one legal enactment and is to be brought to a close by another. Every official act of every police officer in India—from the highest to the lowest—is based on law and on the 'Rule of Law'. The sole functions of the Police are those commonly called 'Law and Order' and 'Watch and Ward'. Both are exclusively concerned with the detection or prevention of infringements of the law.

The conception of the Rule of Law is the basis of sovereignty throughout the British Empire. The Indian view of sovereignty is entirely different. Law in India, before it became part of the British Empire, was always subject to the will of an autocratic sovereign. Kingship was always a game—the highest stake for which a man could play. The British in India repeatedly won this stake for the East India Company between 1644 and 1859, when the Great Queen played the final hand. The British object throughout was, not sovereignty, but security for trade in India; and the British way to ensure security was by the operation of the Rule of Law.

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In the Indian view, among the chief duties and functions of the sovereign—always an autocrat—were to dispense justice and to punish crime. The King sat in open Durbar for the purpose and his executive officers and his army enforced his will.

It is natural that British constitutional practice and theory are not fully comprehended by the mass of the Indian people. So it often happens that the Police Forces of the 'Government established by law in British India' are regarded by Indians as performing some part of the functions of an autocratic king. As a corollary to this the Indian has often failed to understand the freedom which the law has given to him. This tragic misunderstanding reached its climax in the Non-co-operation movement of Mr. Gandhi and the Congress party. The Congress party failed to take full advantage of its power to play a part among the law-makers; and Mr. Gandhi broke the law—the Salt Law and other laws—because he, a barrister of the Inner Temple, thought—subconsciously—to tilt at an autocrat who did not exist. He thereby brought his followers into a fantastic conflict with the Police.

His misunderstanding was similar to that of a Baluchi shepherd who, wishing to confess his share in a dacoity, said to a British police officer—'Tho hākīm ē'—('Thou art a ruler'), meaning, 'I will confess to you, for I admit your power and right to judge me.'

I wish to disclaim any intention of expressing any political opinion in this preface or in this book. Consistently with what I have said above I maintain that it is necessary that every Indian—not only the small minority which understands legal principles—should recognize that, under the Rule of Law, the Police are not concerned with policy or politics. It is for the Government to lay down policies. It is for the Police to carry them out, *in accordance with the law of the land*.

It would, perhaps, be superfluous to insist on such a truism, if it were not so generally unrecognized.

If I have anywhere made a statement which appears to

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have a political complexion, I ask the reader for the indulgence of a charitable interpretation. I ask him to remember that any attempt to record events inevitably mirrors the views of those who participated in them. In this case they are not the writer's views, but rather the views of the various co-actors in public events.

If politics are no concern of the Police, crime with political motives inevitably makes contacts with them. It cannot, unfortunately, be omitted from the story of the Indian Police.

Again, at the risk of repeating myself I would say that what I have described as the Indian view of sovereignty has not been without its effect on the course of events in recent Indian history—and this book deals with certain facets of history.

It does not, obviously, deal with all aspects of Indian life, and it must, therefore, be remembered that it is not a description of the whole life of the Indian peoples. It only deals with certain aspects of life—with matters of police and crime. Where it deals with crime it is capable of being read as giving a false impression of Indian life, just as a catalogue of crimes in England would give a false impression of English life.

I need hardly say that it is not intended to convey any such false impression. It is intended to describe the Indian Police and their work, and, incidentally, it cannot but describe the most important of their problems.

I have not included any account of the Police in Burma, although Burma is at present a province of the Indian Empire. It is shortly to be separated from it. Its police problems are different, just as its people are different from those of India; and there has never been the close contact between the Police of Burma and India, such as has existed between the Police of the various provinces of India proper.

I have used the word 'landowner' loosely, to translate the Indian word 'zemindar', although it is technically incorrect, and to indicate those of the upper classes who derive their income from land held by tenants or cultivators under various systems of tenure. While their position is technically

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and legally different from that of the English landowners, the word approximately represents their social position.

The excessive use of capital letters is an unfortunate habit, which has persisted in official documents in India. I have felt compelled to employ them in a certain number of places, where their disuse would strike the eye accustomed to matters Indian as unfamiliar. Instances are the ranks and titles, such as Sub-Inspector, Duffadar and Jaghirdar. In this respect, as in the spelling of Indian names, there is no uniformity, and the practice varies from province to province.

In the chapter dealing with village police I have closely followed J. Matthai (*Village Government in British India*) in several passages.

I am indebted to the staffs at the Libraries at the India Office and the office of the High Commissioner for India for their courtesy and for the assistance rendered in obtaining access to various papers and records dealing with police and crime in India.

I am indebted to a retired officer of the Indian Police in the Punjab for much very valuable assistance and for many details. He wishes to remain anonymous, but his identity will not be veiled from those who know him.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

**T**HE MOST elementary knowledge of the geography, peoples and conditions of life in India will make it plain that the problem of policing India not only is, but must be, essentially different from the problem of policing England. England is a small, homogeneous nation, whose people have been accustomed for centuries to the institutions of local self-government, and, as the necessary complement to this, to an instinctive respect for the law, particularly the criminal law of their land. They have gradually established the principle of the 'Rule of Law'.

The law in England is not so much an engine for the repression and punishment of crime as a part of the national heritage. It is a fitting expression of the determination of a proud and law-abiding people to safeguard and improve for themselves and their descendants the privileges and the amenities, social, legal and material—in a word, the polity which they have inherited.

The criminal law of England has its roots deep in English history. It has grown and changed with the life of the English people themselves. The arm of that law, the English policeman, is the heir to traditions which stretch far back into Anglo-Saxon times. An account of his long ancestry may be read in any text-book of English constitutional history.

At a first glance, it is true, the disciplined professional forces created by Peel's reform of 1829 and by the Acts of 1854 (Borough Police) and 1888 (County Police) appear to have nothing in common with the old 'watches', 'runners', 'parish constables' and the like; but the vital principle to which all these bygone guardians of the law owed their

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origin finds, if anything, still clearer and more resolute expression in the organized constabulary of the present day. That principle is that a free people should, in the last resort, control not only the makers of its laws, but also the executive authorities which enforce those laws. Thus the policeman is but a citizen in uniform, entrusted by his fellow-citizens with powers which are necessary for the maintenance of the common peace and welfare, but which are clearly defined and are at all times to be exercised under a sense of complete responsibility to the chosen representatives of the citizens as a whole. In boroughs and urban districts the control exercised by the watch committees over the police is as complete as it need be, and even in the counties the joint committees are now in all essentials as representative of the people as are the watch committees themselves. Only the Metropolitan Police in England are not directly controlled by the people acting through chosen delegates, and even they, in the last resort, are completely amenable to the control of Parliament.

Again, the English State is an organism whose body is built of innumerable cells—the local governments of all sizes and kinds—parishes, rural districts, urban districts, boroughs, county boroughs and counties for general administration, and other units too numerous to mention for the other multifarious activities of English public life. The traditions and activities of most of these local governing bodies reach back to the dawn of English history, and local autonomy is as vital a part of an Englishman's heritage as is his right to personal freedom. Thus the policing of England falls naturally to local bodies, and the English police forces are small, local and in most essentials locally controlled. Save Yorkshire, none even of the English counties is as big as an average Indian district.

Finally, for police purposes, England is an entirely homogeneous unit. A London policeman would not find himself in an alien land if he were transferred to Oxford, Bristol or Newcastle. The work of the many separate police forces of

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England is therefore both in essence and in accident the same over the whole country.

Contrast with this the state of affairs in India. There we have a vast sub-continent, the size of Europe with Russia omitted. Within this area are to be found not only such wide geographical, climatic, racial, social, economic, and religious differences as untravelled Englishmen cannot even understand, but even different levels of civilization. Between such races as the Gonds, Bhils and Santals on the one hand and the highest strata of Hindu and Mahomedan society on the other lies all the difference between pre-history and the twentieth century. The distances in India are overwhelming. Tracts as big as England contain no towns of 50,000 inhabitants, and India is mainly a country of peasants. Until our own day most Indian villages lived the self-sufficing life of the Middle Ages, and education was confined to a negligible minority. Beyond a few survivals of a simple form of local self-government in the villages, no system of what Englishmen understand by local government had ever been able to grow up in India. Intercourse with strangers, until the coming of railways, was scanty and hazardous, and the outlook of the Indian village dweller hardly extended beyond the bounds of the village fields. India, in all save the physical sense, was until recently a land of limited horizons. Even in the golden days of the greatest of her pre-Mahomedan rulers—Asoka, Vikramaditya, Harsha—she developed no self-governing institutions of an advanced type; and certainly no such institutions were developed after the various Mahomedan conquests. When the British took over the government of one province after another, they found the machinery for local self-government missing, and thus the policing of India, like her economic development, became of necessity the duty of the central government.

Even these few general remarks give some impression of the amazing versatility of the Indian Police. Conditions of life, and with them conditions of Police work, vary from province to province: even, in some cases, from district to



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district. On the North-West and North-East Frontiers, in tracts like the Moplah and Bhil countries, the Police often have to fill the part of troops, and, be it noted, of troops of a peculiarly hardy and steadfast type. In the great centres of habitation, the Criminal Investigation Departments match their wits against some of the cleverest criminals in the world. As occasion demands, the Indian Police help to fight plague, famine, drought, flood, fire and all the other evils incidental to life in India. They patrol great lonely stretches of mountain border and giant rivers; they supervise, restrain and now try to reform the many criminal tribes whose members for generations have made crime their principal or only means of livelihood; they keep the peace between rival communities at times of communal tension and religious excitement; they have sometimes to play the part of troops in dealing with armed gangs of robbers or risings of ignorant, primitive or fanatical tribesmen or communities; and in addition to all this they investigate from day to day a vast number of criminal offences far more varied in type than those which come before the English Police.

## CHAPTER II

### POLICE IN INDIA BEFORE 1861. ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL AND EARLY BRITISH SYSTEMS

**T**HE INDIAN POLICE system is a creation of the British Government and rests on the basic ideals of efficiency and subordination to the law of the land.

On the whole, it represents a complete breakaway from all pre-British systems which can be traced in India, chiefly because it provides a professional and regularly organized police force, with strictly defined powers, privileges and duties, and because it separates the preventive and investigating agency from the authority which tries and punishes criminals. Critics of the Indian administration will at once try to counter this statement by pointing to the combination of judicial and executive powers in the hands of the District Magistrate; but this is an old fallacy which deceives no unprejudiced observer who studies the facts. In recent years, with a growing appreciation of the real nature of the constitutional problem, this question has naturally attracted less attention.

As it deals with fundamental issues, the main facts connected with it should be briefly considered.

The District Magistrate is never personally concerned in an investigation, responsibility for which rests entirely on the District Superintendent of Police, and nowadays does hardly any judicial work. Even, for the sake of argument, in the event of any injustice being done by a district magistrate, there would be little fear that it would not be exposed and redressed as the result of an appeal to a higher Court. The Indian legal system provides very generously for appeals, of which advantage is freely taken.

The District Magistrate is generally responsible for law

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and order in his district, and for this purpose exercises certain powers as a magistrate. He can issue orders designed to prevent a breach of the peace, or take security in certain cases for good behaviour, although in practice this action is usually taken by magistrates subordinate to him. His functions in regard to both the subordinate magistracy and the police are those of general supervision. Direct control of the work of the Police rests as already stated with the Superintendent of Police.

These two officers thus constitute an interesting duumvirate. They are jointly responsible for peace and good order in the district. They discharge separate functions designed to serve the common purpose.

Under this system, as under any other, much depends on the men who work it. It has had one great merit, which has never, perhaps, been adequately recognized. It has inspired the men who have had to work it with very high ideals of service to their fellow-men—the '*rayat*' of India. The District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police are not only governed by very great traditions, and by the fact of the division of functions between them. They are also subject to the general control exercised in turn, under Government, by their superiors, the Commissioner and the Inspector-General of Police.

Certain sections of Indian opinion, which sometimes do not grasp the niceties of these arrangements, and are apt to attribute even to the humblest constables the functions of autocracy, have tended at times to exaggerate the comprehensiveness of the District Magistrate's powers. Thus a sort of bogey, regarding his combination of executive and judicial functions, was created in the minds of early aspirants to a more liberal constitution for India. The comparatively minor importance and the true bearings of this question are now more generally understood.

Thus the system created by the British Government is distinguished from its predecessors by the separation of the preventive and investigating agency from the authority which tries and punishes criminals.

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It is difficult to trace in India anything like a police system, as the British understand it, before the establishment of British rule in the country. Certainly, from the beginning of Indian history, we find State officials or private persons vested with police functions, but nothing like the present ubiquitous, regularly organized and legally controlled force. Such indigenous police systems as we can trace were, generally, based on land tenure. Great landholders were required to apprehend disturbers of the peace and restore stolen goods, or, sometimes, in default, to make good the losses sustained within the area of their influence. Responsibility duly devolved on subordinate landholders in their various degrees. Village responsibility, as of old in England, was enforced and could only be avoided by transferring responsibility as by tracking or producing the criminals. Village responsibility was enforced through the local headmen, who were helped by an appropriate number of village watchmen, the real executive police of the country, who kept watch at night, reported the arrival of strangers within the village bounds, and helped to detect crimes. To some extent, this feature of the indigenous police systems has been incorporated in the present system.

As early as the laws of Manu, we find references, necessarily vague, to police systems in India. The chief duty of a king, according to these laws, is to restrain violence and punish evildoers. He has to keep up patrols and what we should now call police stations or fixed posts, and also many spies. There is an interesting approval of the use of *agents provocateurs* (anathema, according to English ideas), and all the King's subjects were required to assist him in the criminal administration.

Later, in the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya, which is believed to have been written about 300 B.C., there is a detailed and fascinating description of the use of spies in the criminal administration. Kautilya advises the King to have his spies controlled by reliable and capable ministers. There are nine different groups of spies, according to this authority, who are

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to be used to watch different kinds of people. One group of spies is to consist of men skilful in reading the minds of others. Another group should be ascetics, a third agriculturalists, to detect crimes among the rural population, a fourth be chosen from among ruined merchants, to spy on the industrial and commercial community, a fifth group to be recruited from the gladiator class, and so on. It is possible that no modern C.I.D. in any country has ever been so ubiquitous or so highly organized as the system of espionage described by Kautilya, which must have corresponded largely with the actual arrangements. The *Arthashastra* contains amazingly interesting accounts of the work of individual spies, whose names are given and whose subterfuges and disguises are described. Again, the Sanskrit drama, particularly the play called *The Little Clay Cart*, describes police methods in the India of those far-off days in terms which might be taken out of a present-day attack on the Indian Police.

Between the days of the Maurayas and their immediate successors and the Mahomedan invasions, we catch practically no glimpse of police in India. It is disappointing that Fa Hien and Hiuen Tsiang make no mention of police in their accounts of their travels in India, although the latter, who toured the dominions of the great Harsha, mentions that he was several times robbed by footpads. The *Harisha Charita*, too, is provokingly silent on the subject.

Not until Moghul times do we see anything like a definite police organization, and even then we must beware of translating the medieval Moghul arrangements into modern terms. The ideas which we have already seen to be the basis of Indian indigenous police systems survived unchanged into Moghul times. The villages were still left responsible for their own safety and that of travellers within their limits. A Moghul province was a replica of the Empire, and provincial government centred in the provincial capital. Outside that, the people were left alone as long as they paid their revenue and did not disturb the peace. The Governor of a province

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was called the *Subhedar* or *Nazim*: under him, in charge of subdivisions, living in smaller towns, were a number of officials called *faujdars*.

The *faujdar's* duties were mixed. Primarily he was a revenue official, but he was also vested with powers enabling him to keep the peace and cope with bands of highwaymen, rebellious chiefs, and other turbulent persons. He had to guard roads and to prevent blacksmiths from making fire-arms; and to help him in these specifically police duties he had a number of subordinates called *thanadars*, or officers in charge of posts, whose name survives to this day in the Indian Police, to denote the officer in charge of a *thana*, or police station. Perhaps the nearest parallel to the *faujdar* in the administration of British India was the Magistrate-Collector of a district before 1860, who was responsible for both the revenue and the executive police administration of his district. But we must not import the ideas of a later age into the Moghul system of administration, for the Police activities of the *faujdar* were limited to intervening with military force when widespread violence or rebellion compelled him to do so. Similarly, the Moghul *thanadars* were but editions *in petto* of the *faujdars*. They never investigated cases of ordinary crime or carried on any of the many routine duties of the present-day *thanadars*. Ordinary crime, as we have seen, was the affair of the people of the locality in which it occurred, and the village agency which attended to it was not remunerated from the state or provincial revenues.

There was one Moghul official who bore some resemblance to an Indian inspector in the modern Police. This was the *kotwal*, the chief of the city police, and to this day in many cities in northern India the Indian officer in charge of the city police is called the *kotwal* and his headquarters the *kotwali*. A vivid description of his duties is given in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, the diary of the great Akbar. He had to be present at all royal and viceregal *durbars*. He received daily reports from watchmen and sweepers of doings in the city, and he maintained a number of paid informers. He arranged

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the watch and ward of streets at night, and at all places of public gathering he kept subordinates to look out for pick-pockets and other sneak thieves. The control of prostitutes, the distillation of liquors and the sale of intoxicants were within his jurisdiction. All these duties were the same as those of his modern counterpart; but in addition he had others which are now no longer entrusted to the Police. Thus, he had to look after people in prison, hear the charges against them and decide many of these, and also execute sentences. It is clear from the accounts of the doings of kotwals which have come down to us that these officers were very efficient, but, of course, often abominably cruel and tyrannous according to our notions. It must be remembered, too, that kotwals were only to be found in very big cities.

The modern Criminal Investigation Departments were represented by different classes of newswriters, some of whom were high in the confidence of Governors of provinces and even of the Emperors. These men were stationed all over the Empire, and reported at irregular intervals the more important happenings in their districts.

In short, the Hindu and the Moghul systems of government were autocratic and military. Under Asoka, Akbar and the Peshwas the principles were the same, with considerable differences in detail. The ruler and his principal agents combined in their own persons the functions of military commander for internal security purposes, revenue collector, judge, magistrate, and head of the Police. Subhedars in charge of provinces, faujdars and deshmukhs in charge of subdivisions of provinces had these powers. Zemindars or tax-farmers were responsible for crime. Village headmen were revenue and police officials and had magisterial powers.

As the Moghul Empire declined, their system of administration began to disappear. The British starting from their trading settlements at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras gradually assumed control of province after province. The administration of justice in the original settlements was based on English law, but in dealing with the Indians in the



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jurisdiction of those settlements due regard was paid to indigenous law and custom. Hence there was, for instance, a Kazi, as an exponent of Mahomedan law, on the staff of the courts in Bombay from the earliest times until 1862.

As they took over the government of the provinces in the interior, the British adopted the system of administration as they found it in each locality, making, as a rule, as little change as possible.

In both cases—in the capitals and in the provinces—the administration of criminal justice was profoundly unsatisfactory. After many experiments and many failures a good working system was gradually developed. This, the present system, has only been in force for about seventy years. Its distinguishing features are that it is a civil not a military system; and that the machinery for the administration of criminal justice consists of Chartered High Courts, independent of the executive Government, Sessions Judges and Magistrates whose orders are subject to an appeal to the High Court, and an organized Police Force.

The transition from a military autocracy to the fully developed modern system was slow and often painful. Different experiments were tried in different parts of the country, and the various provinces did not progress simultaneously by the same stages.

The history of police in British India for the century prior to 1860 was, as a part of the general administration, that of a long series of experiments, often of unsuccessful experiments.

Even in the Presidency Cities, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, where Europeans were settled in considerable numbers, the Police were very inefficient, and the dissatisfaction of the residents was forcibly and frequently expressed. The available records have been examined in the case of Bombay, and the results published in the *History of the Bombay City Police, 1672–1916*, by S. M. Edwardes. His book shows that the records are far from complete. A body of militia was formed about 1672, which served as 'night-watches against



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surprise and robbery', and otherwise performed duties which now appertain to the civil police. In 1771 this body was styled the 'Bhandari Militia', and in this year it was re-organized and more definitely employed on police duties. The results were not satisfactory, and in 1778 the Grand Jury demanded a thorough reform of the Police. The first appointment of an executive Chief of Police followed in 1779 with the title of 'Lieutenant of Police'. At that date there was a 'Superintendent of Police' in Calcutta.

In 1765 the acquisition of the *diwani*—that is, the revenue administration of Bengal with its somewhat indefinite responsibilities—had brought the British to the point at which their duty to ensure the safety and welfare of the people who had now come under their care caused them to take an active interest in the suppression of violent crime, and in the criminal administration generally. By a regulation of 1772 Civil and Criminal Courts were established for each district of Bengal, practically that is for what is now Bihar.

In certain proceedings of the Governor in Council, dated April the 19th, 1774, Warren Hastings develops his ideas on the subject of Police. While congratulating his administration on the establishment of the above Courts, he says that the country is yet too unsettled to allow their full benefits to be reaped. Numerous gangs of *dacoits* (robbers) are infesting the province. He alleges that they are being protected by zemindars (landowners) and are preying on the latter's tenants, who dare not complain. Some villages are even said to pay regular tribute to the robbers. He believes all this evil to have been produced by the disappearance of the Moghul faujdars and their subordinate thanadars, by the resumption of lands allotted to the thanadars in reward for their services, and lastly by the system of farming the revenues. The old zemindars had an interest in keeping down robbery because their tenants looked to them to recompense their losses. The tax-farmers who have taken the places of the zemindars have no such liabilities and are indifferent to the increase in robbery. The Governor finds that the very fairness of our

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Courts is giving encouragement to evildoers, since the standard of evidence demanded makes punishment difficult. Many notorious leaders of dacoit gangs have been arrested and let off for want of evidence.

It is interesting, in parenthesis, to read this opinion concerning the standard of evidence demanded by British Courts of Justice, as every police officer of the present day must have heard similar views expressed by many Indians, official and unofficial.

Warren Hastings considered that it might be advisable to introduce some extraordinary legislation against dacoits as a temporary measure. He proposed, therefore, to restore the faujdars for the suppression of violent crime and for the communication of intelligence; and to require all landowners to assist them in these duties. The tax-farmers were to put all their revenue servants at the disposal of the faujdars, whose territorial jurisdictions were to be strictly defined. It was, nevertheless, to be lawful for one faujdar to send his subordinates into the jurisdiction of another whenever it was necessary to do so in order to arrest offenders. The help of landowners was to be secured by the threat of penalties for failure to comply with the just demands of the faujdars; and for them to have illicit dealings with known criminals was to be a capital offence. Lastly, and this is perhaps the most important provision of all, a separate office was to be created, under the authority and control of the President of the Council, to receive and collate the information collected by the faujdars. This office was the germ from which sprang the fully developed Police system of modern India.

Eighteen months after writing the above minute Warren Hastings returns to the subject of police. Obviously the zemindars and tax-farmers have not been giving the faujdars the help demanded of them. In the proceedings of the Governor in Council dated the 9th December 1775, he directs the Deputy Governor of the province, who had been given the oversight of criminal justice, to order zemindars

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and tax-farmers to deliver to the several faujdars an account of the number of the indigenous police posts in their districts together with the names of the persons by whom they were held. He was to see that they strictly obeyed the earlier orders to help the faujdars in all matters relating to his jurisdiction.

At first only four faujdars were appointed, and their jurisdictions did not cover the whole province. Where there were no faujdars the ancient system of village police responsible to the zemindars was left in operation. These arrangements did not prove satisfactory, and in 1781 all the faujdars except one, the faujdar of Hooghly, were withdrawn.

This first British attempt to institute a system of police in an Indian province having failed, violent crime and dacoity continued to grow in strength. When Cornwallis became Governor-General of Bengal, he found the criminal administration in a state of utter chaos. Life and property were insecure throughout the province. His first act towards remedying this state of affairs was a most salutary one. He took the administration of criminal justice out of the hands of the Deputy Governor (a zemindar), and removed the chief Criminal Court to Calcutta. He also established four courts of circuit.

Cornwallis insisted that a regular Police Force was necessary to apprehend criminals. Zemindars and others who had hitherto maintained thanadars and police establishments were required to disband them forthwith and entertain them no more. Magistrates of districts were ordered to divide them into police jurisdictions, each to be in charge of a darogah, or supervising officer, with appropriate establishment. These darogahs were to be appointed by the magistrate, but they could only be dismissed by the Governor-General in Council. They were empowered to receive reports of offences and arrest accused persons, sending them to a magistrate within twenty-four hours of arrest. Once a person had been arrested, the darogah had no power to release him; only a magistrate could do that. Village watch-

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men were made subject to the orders of the darogahs and had to supply them with information. Finally, darogahs were given authority to pursue criminals into other jurisdictions and there require the help of magistrates and other darogahs; to keep the peace at markets, fairs and other places of public gathering; and to submit monthly reports on the state of their jurisdiction to their District Magistrate.

These reforms, salutary though they were and obviously in the right direction, did not remedy very greatly the deplorable state of affairs which had moved Cornwallis to action. Following Cornwallis, Wellesley and Bentinck both tried to cope with the flood of crime which was engulfing Bengal, and, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Madras also. This was a period of chaos and internecine war throughout a large part of India. The island of Bombay did not escape the consequences, but 'was the scene of constant robberies by armed gangs', even after a Grand Jury of 1793 had again drawn pointed attention to 'the total inadequacy of the police arrangements' and a committee had been appointed and various measures taken by Act of Parliament, by a Commission of the Peace, by the appointment of a Superintendent of Police and by a reorganization of the subordinate personnel.

Wellesley held an inquiry into police affairs in 1801, and in 1806 Bentinck appointed a committee to consider the possibility of improving the police system in Madras. Nevertheless, the state of crime in the three presidencies continued to grow more and more serious. In 1809 the Bombay Government appointed a committee which recommended the adaptation to Bombay of Colquhoun's system for improving the Police of London. By 1813 things had reached such a pitch that the intervention of the Court of Directors was rendered necessary, and they appointed a special committee of their own. On receipt of the committee's report, they issued orders in 1814. These orders, while condemning the darogah system, insisted on the maintenance of the old village police as the best means of ensuring internal peace. The

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Court quite rightly emphasized the view that the village police were organized according to the ancient customs and circumstances of the land, and held that for that reason they must be better than a totally insufficient agency such as the darogah system provided. Their most far-reaching direction was one by which the duties of district magistrate and control of the police were transferred from the District Judge, with whom they then rested, to the Collector. This resulted, at any rate outside Bengal, in the control of the existing executive establishment of Government being in the hands of a man with a knowledge of the local conditions in his district. In Bengal, owing to the permanent settlement, there was no subordinate revenue establishment, and the darogah system was in consequence retained, but in an improved form.

In Madras a Regulation (No. XI of 1816) was issued to give effect to the orders of the Court. The famous Sir Thomas Munro was one of the Commissioners appointed under this Madras Regulation, whose results he describes in the following words:

‘We have now in most places reverted to the old police of the country, executed by village watchmen, mostly hereditary, under the direction of the heads of the villages, tehsildars (minor revenue officials) of districts and the collector and magistrate of the province. The establishments of the tehsildars are employed without distinction either in police or revenue duties as the occasion requires.’

The Bombay Government took over the administration of the territories of the Peshwas in Poona in 1817. At first the functions of judge, magistrate and head of the police were combined in the hands of one man, and little or no change was made in the powers of the existing Maratha functionaries. In 1826 the duties of judge and magistrate were separated, and by Regulation XII of 1827 effect was given to the orders of the Court of Directors (the orders of 1814), and the police system was made to conform in all essentials to that of Madras. The Sadr Fouzdari Adawlat, or chief Criminal

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Court, was constituted at the same time, with powers of general control over the Police.

Meanwhile, in Bengal further developments had been taking place, and an attempt had been made to introduce special and expert control of the police. In 1808 an officer was appointed with the title of Superintendent of Police to supervise the Police of three divisions of Bengal—namely, Calcutta, Dacca and Murshidabad. The main idea of this office was that its incumbent should collate the information from over a wide area so as to make possible extensive police operations against dacoit gangs. The Superintendent of Police was also magistrate of the 24 Pargannahs and had superior concurrent criminal jurisdiction with the several district and city magistrates. He could grant pardons and he worked largely through informers and spies, thus anticipating in an interesting fashion the methods of the later Thuggee and Dacoity Department. This system worked so well that it was extended to Patna, Benares and Bareilly. It continued to flourish until the end of the 'twenties, when the office of Divisional Commissioner was created. The powers of superintendence over the police of a number of districts were then transferred to the new Commissioners, while the executive charge of the district police was left in the hands of the collector, who had now acquired the functions of district magistrate.

The change proved so disastrous that the Select Committee of Parliament which considered the affairs of the East India Company drew attention in the famous 'Fifth Report' (in 1813) to the deterioration in the Police, particularly in Bengal. The removal of the Superintendents gave the darogahs—who had been left there—ample opportunities for illegal gain. The Select Committee collected much information about the malpractices of the darogahs and their subordinates, and showed that these arose partly from the necessarily inefficient supervision of the Commissioners who were fully occupied in discharging their many other functions. With Peel's reforms of 1827 in mind, the Court of



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Directors issued a despatch urging the consideration of similar measures in India. They gave orders that expense was not to stand in the way of improvement.

On receipt of the directors' despatch Sir Thomas Metcalfe circulated a number of questions throughout India, and appointed a committee in 1838 to consider the replies. This committee found that the chief cause of inefficiency was inadequate supervision.

Thus after worrying the question for nearly seventy years the British authorities in India were beginning to perceive the truth, and the time was ripe for the solution. This does not mean that the system of government which they devised was not efficient. It was certainly more efficient than the system which it superseded, in spite of the fact that its methods were less drastic and its spirit was more liberal: in spite of the fact that it introduced, from the beginning, personal freedom under the rule of law in place of capricious autocracy, among a people who knew no other form of government. Its efficiency impressed the great Abbé Dubois, who left India in 1823: and no man ever had a more intimate knowledge of the peoples of India than he, or greater insight.

There is something dramatic about the next development in the long search for a solution of the problem of upholding the law and maintaining order, by lawful measures, in India. It was as though the moment brought the man and his measure.

The solution was found, not in the places where Englishmen and Scotchmen had settled—and grumbled since the sixteenth century about the inadequate policing of the neighbourhood on their Grand Juries and otherwise—not in the districts of Bengal or Madras where so many attempts had been made, but in the newly won province of Sind. This might seem the more remarkable in view of the evil reputation of the country, 'the Unhappy Valley' as it was soon called, hard to get at, and hard to get away from, wild and uncivilized, ringed in by desert coasts, desert mountains and

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desert sands, unendurably hot, unknown to and shut off from the India to which it had given a name.

Sind had been a province in the Persian Empire, and later in that of the Macedonian successors of Alexander the Great. Hence the name of its great river was transferred in Western tongues to cover the whole of the peninsula for which there has never been a native name, although the Arabs and Pathans, learning from the Greeks and Persians, gave its people the generic name of Hindus. Medes and Macedonians, Scythians, Huns, Arabs, Pathans, Moghuls, and Baluchis overran and overlorded the province in such an unending succession of swarms as to obliterate all trace of the village organization of the 'Vedic' peoples. The people of Sind, Baluchi and Sindhi (claiming Rajput descent), were in a tribal state of society when the British arrived, and even the remnants of the Moghul system of administration had almost disappeared.

There were neither village police nor the servants of a centralized revenue administration to confuse the issue, and the genius of the rough, but very ready, old conqueror of Sind took him straight to the point when Sir Charles Napier based his Sind Police on the model of the Royal Irish Constabulary. The secret of his success was that he made the Police a separate and self-contained organization under their own superior officers, whose sole duty and responsibility was to supervise them, and to see that they had adequate means to deal with crime.

Elsewhere in India at this time the Police under the District Magistrates were inadequately supervised and they had no superior officer with personal responsibility for keeping crime within bounds and an adequate organization for the purpose. The District Magistrate had other functions and he did not—he could hardly be expected to—personally supervise the investigation of important and serious offences. These district police, which had partly grown from the darogah system and partly from the subordinate revenue establishments, were commonly known as the 'Barqandazi



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Police'. The name comes from the Persian words *barq* and *andaz* and means 'a thrower of lightning'. It was not given in jest, as might appear, but was obviously the name given to soldiers when firearms were first introduced and, like many Persian words, it was retained in India after it had fallen into disuse in Persia. To this day, watchmen and messengers in some parts of India are called *barqandazis*. The evidence given before the 1860 Commission showed that the *barqandazi* police were effete and inefficient in dealing with crime. They could not even, despite their name, be entrusted with more than a small number of arms, so they were useless for such purposes as escorting treasure, guarding treasuries and quelling disturbances. Troops had to be employed on these duties, and this, of course, reacted unfavourably on military efficiency.

In certain places Irregular Regiments and Police Battalions were employed on such duties, especially where the countryside was seriously given to disorder. Such were the Ahmednagar Battalion, the Satara irregular Battalion, the Bhil Corps, Tyrwhit's Horse, General Jacob's irregulars on the Sind Frontier, the six Punjab police battalions raised by Sir Henry Lawrence after the second Sikh War, various police battalions in Bengal, and so on.

These were raised to meet the special conditions arising from the disordered state of the country following on the dissolution of the Moghul Empire. Some of them were subsequently absorbed in the district Police Forces of the reorganized constabulary.

Sir Charles Napier had annexed Sind in 1843. In 1847, Sir George Clerk, Governor of Bombay, visited Sind, and was so greatly impressed by the efficiency of the Sind Police that he decided to reorganize the *barqandazi* police of the Deccan on those lines. In 1853 a Superintendent of Police was appointed to each district in Bombay, Indian officers being appointed under them to each taluka or division, and the general control of the Police in the whole province was taken from the Sadr Fouzdari Adawlat, the chief Criminal

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Court, and placed in the hands of the Provincial Government. A change on similar lines was effected in Madras soon afterwards. In Oudh, the day after the fall of Lucknow, Outram asked Colonel Bruce to submit a scheme for police. This was done, again on the Sind model, and for the town of Lucknow a force was constituted on the lines of the London Police.

Thus by 1860 the solution had been found and adopted in some parts of India. The Commission of that year was directed to examine all systems of police existing in India and to draft proposals subject to the following general principles:

(1) The Indian Police to be subject to the Civil Government, and its duties to be civil, not military.

(2) Its functions to be (a) protective (as to the public) and repressive (as to the criminal); (b) detective; police and judicial functions being separated.

(3) The organization and discipline of the force to be similar to that of the Indian Army and to be centralized in the hands of the executive Government.

(4) The pay of the lowest ranks to be superior to that of an unskilled labourer.

(5) The interior economy of the force to be in the hands of police officers.

(6) There was only to be one force in any locality, not one under the police officer and one under a magistrate.

(7) The village police to be used primarily as sources of information and not employed on executive duties.

The Commission recommended that a Civil Police Force should be formed in every part of India on the model of the British Constabulary Forces, and that it should be organized on a provincial basis. The police powers of Commissioners should be abolished and for each province an Inspector-General of Police should be appointed to be responsible to the provincial government for the control of the provincial force. The duties of the latter should be the maintenance of the peace, the prevention and detection of crime, the escorting and guarding of prisoners and treasure. The village

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police should be supervised in all their public duties by the Superintendent of Police with a view to making them a useful supplement to the regular constabulary.

In this way, after many failures, by the labour of many hands the weapon was forged; and from this point begins the story of the present Indian Police Force.

## CHAPTER III

### AFTER 1861. THE ORGANIZED PROVINCIAL POLICE FORCES

**T**HE POLICE ACT of 1861 instituted the system of police which is still in force in India. Naturally that system has developed and become more complex and more highly organized as the work for which it was designed has grown in volume and increased in difficulty and subtlety, but the Act which regulates the organization, recruitment and discipline of the Indian Police is still Act V of 1861.

There was not much in the Act which was new, and had not already made its appearance in Sind or Madras or elsewhere, and at first it was not even extended to the whole of British India. Certain backward areas like the Punjab Frontier Districts, now the North-West Frontier Province, were not ready for the new constabulary; and the old *barqandazi* police and even one or two semi-military irregular forces survived here and there. With these few and unimportant exceptions the Act imposed a uniform police system on all British India; and the essence of that system was that police organization should be by provinces, and that within the provinces police should be recruited, trained, disciplined and controlled by their own British officers. Almost at a stroke, organized, disciplined and well-supervised provincial forces were substituted for the innumerable forces of infinitely varying composition and efficiency which, as we have seen, had gradually grown up as a result of the utter lack of any uniform police policy in India.

The Indian Police Act is a short one. It has only forty-seven sections, and of these about half deal with such matters as Police powers with regard to public assemblies, the punishments for certain offences committed on roads, and so on, or

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they define the meaning of certain terms which are used in the Act. The sections which refer specifically to the organization and control of the Police are less than twenty in number; yet within the limits of these few sections, so intentionally general is their wording, the Indian police system is able to expand continually in response to ever-changing conditions. Briefly, these sections establish the Police on a provincial basis, arrange for their general subordination to the magistracy, and sketch the merest outline of the establishment of the provincial force. Details are carefully avoided. The Act is a mere framework which the provincial governments are invited to clothe.

The organization of the Indian Police by provinces followed naturally from the fact that the civil government of British India is organized on a similar basis. There are now, excluding Burma, nine provinces—Bengal, Madras, Bombay, the United Provinces, the Punjab, Assam, Bihar and Orissa, the Central Provinces and the North-West Frontier Province. Each of these has a fully developed Police Department with an Inspector-General at its head. Certain minor areas, such as Delhi, Coorg, Baluchistan and Ajmer-Merwara also have their own police.

None of these provinces is an entirely natural unit, either geographically, ethnically or linguistically. Each one owes its extent and shape to more or less fortuitous circumstances. Most of them are bigger than many European countries, and each of them can show within its borders very great diversities of climate, country, language and culture. *Mutatis mutandis*, a general description of the Punjab may be taken as an example of what an Indian province is like.

The total area of the Punjab is just over 133,000 square miles, but about 36,000 of these are within the limits of Indian States. The greatest breadth of the Punjab from east to west is about 400 miles, while the extreme distance from north to south is about 300 miles. Within this area are to be found the most striking varieties of country and climate, from the lifeless glaciers of the High Himalayas to the burn-

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ing, sandy deserts of Bahawalpur in the far south-west, and of the Sind-Sagar Doab in the western districts of Mianwali and Shahpur. But the greater part of the province lies in the plains of the Indo-Gangetic alluvium, which in places, notably in the Amritsar and Jullundur districts, is exceptionally rich and fertile.

Over this great area a very diverse population is unevenly distributed. Numbering in all about twenty-three millions, the inhabitants of the Punjab are most thickly settled in the two fertile districts mentioned above, Jullundur and Amritsar. Here the density of population is about 640 to the square mile, and it diminishes gradually, through the 540 or so to the square mile of the Sialkot district, to the 96 of the dry north-western area and the 77 per square mile of the Himalayan tract.

There are only two towns in the province with a population of over 100,000 and less than sixty which hold even 10,000 souls. The great majority of the people live in villages, an average specimen of which will contain about 500 inhabitants.

Ethnically, the province is an epitome of the many-tongued jumble of races which we call India. In the Himalayan cantons of Lahul and Spiti are Tibetan-speaking Mongols who profess a degraded form of Buddhism. Elsewhere in the Himalayas are quaint little colonies of descendants of the old Aryan conquerors of India, speaking many Sanskritic dialects and keeping aloof from the main stream of Punjab life. In Dera Ghazi Khan district and along its border are the Baluchis, whose language is a bastard and archaic Persian, having an original core with philological affinities which have been the subject of much discussion. There are Pushtu-speaking Pathans in the Isa Khel tehsil of the Mianwali district and in the Attock district. Over the western part of the province, the prevailing language is western Punjabi or Lahndi, which again is split up into several district dialects. Over most of the remainder of the Punjab the language spoken is Punjabi proper, but in

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the neighbourhood of Delhi is found the purest form of Hindustani, which was originally an artificial *lingua franca*.

Almost as many different stages of culture and civilization as languages are represented in the Punjab. There is a whole world of difference between the primitive, patriarchal, tribal polity of the Baluchis and the life of the sophisticated professional and commercial classes of the towns and the headquarters of districts in the Central Punjab. The inhabitant of the remote Himalayan glens has nothing in common with the Mahomedan cultivator of the western Punjab or the prosperous farmer of the canal colonies. Within the bounds of the one province all stages of culture are represented, from the nomadic Ods of the south-east Punjab to the industrial population of Lahore, Sialkot and Multan. Where the members of one creed or race are in touch with the members of another, there is often tension, if not active hostility, and one of the main factors in the life of the Punjab to-day is Hindu-Mahomedan rivalry, which has grown steadily in intensity as recent conditions have brought the interests of the two great communities more and more into opposition with each other.

Fifty years ago the Punjab was a land of wide spaces and scanty communications. There were no factory industries. The one great business of the people was agriculture, and villagers lived in an isolation which seems incredible to us in these days. The province is now covered with a mesh of railways. Every district has good roads. Even in far-away Dera Ghazi Khan, a motor can be driven from north to south of the district. The very smallest towns have telegraph offices, and a vigorous, widely spread newspaper press has sprung into being. Education has been brought within the reach of the humblest, and decade by decade the ideas and worldly knowledge of the people broaden. In the Punjab, as elsewhere in India, we see the strange juxtaposition of primitive culture and quasi-barbarism on the one hand, and the outward signs of Western material progress and the spread of modern education and political and other ideals



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on the other hand. By stressing one or another of the many heterogeneous elements in Indian life it is possible to give a description of India to fit any theory or suit any prejudice. Only by attempting a complete, unbiassed survey of Indian life in all its many activities is it possible to get even an approximate idea of what is happening in the country.

Such, then, is an Indian province. Physically it is a vast stretch of country with many varied natural conditions and inhabited by many heterogeneous races; socially, industrially, and politically it is the meeting-ground of many vigorous forces, some progressive and healthy, others reactionary or vicious, but all dynamic. It must not be forgotten that hitherto it has been the hand of the British Government which has held these forces in some kind of equilibrium.

The special importance of the communal position in the Punjab came prominently to light in the course of the deliberations of the Round Table Conference during the autumn of 1931. This is not the place to consider and discuss political problems, but the bare fact of their existence must be borne in mind in order to understand the problems of the policing of India, and the setting in which the Indian Police live, work and have their origins.

The names of the other Indian provinces and some of their outstanding features must be very briefly mentioned. The most important statistics relative to matters of police and crime are given in an appendix.

The United Provinces are rich and thickly populated. They are, of course, mainly agricultural, but they contain growing industrial towns, among which Cawnpore is well known. The old seats of empire at Delhi were on their borders and at Agra within their boundaries. Their ancient landed aristocracies still maintain their old traditions. The Hindu and Mahomedan populations being in many parts nearly equal in number, questions relative to communal friction often assume importance.

Bihar and Orissa contain many of the sacred places of



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Hinduism, having been the scene of some of the greatest of the ancient Hindu kingdoms. They are mainly agricultural, with large aboriginal populations.

Bengal contains some of the most thickly populated areas in the world. Its fertile crops and rich soil are famous. Its great port at Calcutta and its clever intellectual people give it a prominent place in Indian life. The Mahomedans, who are less wealthy than the Hindus, are slightly in the majority. The communal problem is accordingly difficult. Education is more widespread than elsewhere in India, and economic problems press peculiarly heavily on the educated middle classes. The Hindus of Bengal have no fighting traditions, which is one of the psychological reasons for terrorism and assassination as a political weapon being adopted by certain small groups among them.

Assam, perhaps the least of the Indian provinces, is backward, hilly and remote. Its people—apart from the intrusive Bengali element—have, in varying degrees, ethnological affinities with the Burmese and Tibetans. There are considerable areas suitable for tea-growing, an industry which has been developed by European tea-planters.

Madras, except for the comparatively small country of the Moplahs, is overwhelmingly Hindu in composition. The question of political power—now an important one everywhere in India—is one between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, not one between Hindus and Mahomedans. Being the most southerly part of India, it has been little affected by the incursions from beyond the frontiers into Northern India. The Dravidian elements predominate among the population, and according to some authorities have had a greater influence on the excessive development of caste principles than any incoming 'Aryan' peoples. At any rate that development has no parallel in any other Indian province.

Bombay is the home of the Marathas who challenged the Moghul power in the centuries immediately preceding British rule. It also contains the rich country of Gujerat—the land of apes and peacocks—and two of the great ports

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of India, Bombay and Karachi. The latter is the capital of the sub-province of Sind. It has been proposed that Sind should be separated from the Bombay Presidency because, as in the North-West Frontier Province and in no other part of India, the Mahomedans compose the great majority of the population. In Gujerat and the Maratha country the Hindus are greatly in the majority.

The Central Provinces also contain a part of the Maratha people as well as considerable numbers of aboriginals. They are comparatively sparsely populated and purely agricultural, with large areas of forest or jungle.

The North-West Frontier Province is one in which military considerations must always be of the first importance. It is not a frontier between two civilized powers. The Pathans across the India Frontier are in a tribal state of organization with a fighting strength equal to that of the whole Indian Army. They acknowledge no sovereign power. Various causes, economic and political, combine to maintain unsettled conditions among them. The Pathans within the Frontier are necessarily influenced by the conditions beyond it. In each of these provinces two or three languages are current among its diverse peoples, and in some there are three languages in use in the courts and in official correspondence. In the Bombay Presidency four languages are used in police offices in four different areas: Marathi, Kanarese, Gujerati and Sindhi; and two others, Urdu and Baluchi, are spoken by considerable numbers of people, some of whom have no great knowledge of any other.

Another aspect of the different provinces, which emphasizes the diversities in the types of men who inhabit them, is to be seen in the distribution of warlike and unwarlike races. The fact that men with age-long fighting traditions like the Pathan or Baluchi tribesmen, or the Sikhs, or the Rajput nobility, or the Maratha or Jat peasantry, live side by side with men whose ancestors have never fought, who themselves have naturally no fighting instincts, has a profound influence on many police problems. The

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fighting races are concentrated in the north and west, and very thinly represented in the east and south. This is best illustrated by the numbers of men furnished by different provinces during the Great War. Under the impulse of the needs of those critical years the Punjab raised 350,000 men; the N.W.F.P., 30,000; the United Provinces, 140,000; and Bombay, 35,000, mostly Marathas. The combined population of these four provinces was about 100 millions. The remaining five provinces with a combined population of about 160 millions raised 60,000 men, of whom more than three-quarters came from the Madras Presidency.

*Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the Central Provinces and Assam* contain comparatively little fighting material. There are considerable portions of the population, especially in these provinces, which have in the past shown little readiness to be embodied in fighting units to defend their homes from an invader, or in the normal circumstances of India to organize the defence of their villages against the attacks of robbers. There are tribal communities like the Sindhis who will at times turn out to attack robbers and will fight fiercely among themselves in the heat of passion, but apparently do not make efficient fighting troops of the type required in modern armies. There are again others like the Bhils, aborigines not yet definitely out of the hunting stage of human development, who regard it as something of a joke to form a gang and rob a fat trader or a moneylender, and will sometimes break out into open outlawry; who have for generations joined the Bhil Corps, as irregulars or police for local service; but have not yet adapted themselves to the conditions imposed on fighting troops.

The British Government has held the diverse forces of all these heterogeneous provinces in some sort of equilibrium for the last century or more. The Indian Police Force is an important component part of the British system of administration. It has played a prominent part, as an organ of government, in the maintenance of this equilibrium. The part it will play and the manner in which it will be con-

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trolled in the future by the autonomous Provincial Governments are among the biggest questions now confronting the Indian peoples.

The Indian policeman is the ubiquitous embodiment of the government. There are millions of people in India who have never seen a squad of soldiers, who never go even to the headquarters of a district, to whom the British officer is hardly more than a name. There is no village, however remote or difficult of access it may be, that is not regularly visited by the Police.

*The range of duties of the Indian Police is far wider than that of the English Police. They are concerned in practically every detail of Indian village life. The state of crops, the irrigation of fields, the condition of roads and paths, private feuds, jealousies and quarrels, feasts, fairs, rejoicings, and all the thousand and one important, trifling, pathetic or humorous details which make up the existence of an Indian rural community are often of professional interest to the police, who thus touch the life of the people at almost every point. And inside each province the organization of the Police is arranged so as to ensure that their control shall be as complete and constant as is possible with the number of men at disposal.*

At the head of the Provincial Police is the Inspector-General. Under his orders are a varying number of Deputy Inspectors-General according to the size of the province, each in charge of a division of the province called a range. Next come the Superintendents of Police in charge of districts, their Assistants and Deputies, who may be in semi-independent charge of subdivisions of the districts, Inspectors with carefully defined supervisory powers, and lastly Sub-Inspectors, Head Constables and Constables. A few quotations from the Punjab Police Rules will show the jurisdiction of these various officers:

‘The Inspector-General is the head of the Police Department and the adviser of the Local Government in all matters connected with the police administration. Under Section 12

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of the Police Act, 1861, he is empowered, subject to the approval of the Governor, to frame such rules and regulations for the force as he may deem expedient.'

The Inspector-General, in fact, is the embodiment of the police of the province *vis-à-vis* its Government. He it is who, acting on his own initiative or on the counsel of competent advisers, frames rules for the guidance of the Police in every branch of their activities, keeps the organization of his department abreast of modern conditions, and is the final arbiter in all matters relating to its internal economy. He is the fount of discipline, and his personality is closely reflected in the tone of the force under his command. It is not too much to say that the welfare and security of the people of any province are as closely bound up with the personality of the Inspector-General of Police as with that of any other one official, save only the Governor himself.

The title of Deputy Inspector-General describes quite literally that officer's position: he is simply the Inspector-General's deputy. 'The jurisdiction of a Deputy Inspector-General', the Rules continue, 'is a range composed of several districts and, in the case of the Deputy Inspector-General of the Criminal Investigation Department, comprises the Criminal Investigation Department and the Finger-Print Bureau. Each Deputy Inspector-General is responsible for the control, efficiency and discipline of the Police Force in his range and for the prevention, registration, investigation and detection of crime within his jurisdiction. In his dealings with Commissioners and District Magistrates, the Deputy Inspector-General is simply the representative of the Inspector-General. He disposes of all matters which lie within his competence, and refers others for the orders of the Inspector-General. All cases in which a difference of opinion arises between himself or the Superintendent on the one hand, and the Commissioner or District Magistrate on the other, on any matter in which the orders of Government are advisable, shall be referred through the Inspector-General.'

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The position and duties of the Deputy Inspector-General appear from these extracts to be somewhat vague, and, as a matter of fact, for some years past there has been an agitation, based on grounds of economy, for the abolition of this office. It is claimed that its abolition would lead to a more prompt despatch of business, a more clearly defined allotment of responsibility, and a general lightening of the load which the administration of the province has to carry. This argument is superficial. Control on the lines necessitated by modern conditions could not possibly be maintained over the Police of an Indian province by one man. There are questions of discipline, departmental detail, promotions, postings and transfers of cadres (sub-inspectors and higher ranks) which cannot be settled on any but a provincial basis and are beyond the scope of the District Superintendents. Were the Inspector-General to attempt to grapple with all these, he would be overwhelmed by an avalanche of details, and the larger questions of control which are his proper concern would be crowded out. The abolition of the office of Deputy Inspector-General would greatly impair police efficiency, and is not likely to become a question of practical politics so long as the efficiency of the organization counts for anything.

With the Superintendent of Police we come to one of the main pillars of our administration in India. He has already been described as being, with his *confrère* of the Indian Civil Service, a member of a duumvirate responsible for the peace of the district. These two officers occupy (and even after the introduction of the reformed constitution it is correct to use the present tense) a position of great importance to the inhabitants of their district in matters involving the public peace and general contentment. The Superintendent and his work will occupy much of this book, and it is not now necessary to do more than quote the brief but comprehensive paragraph in the Police Rules of the Punjab, the principle of which is applicable throughout India.

‘The Superintendent of Police’, runs this authority, ‘is the



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head of the district Police Force. He is responsible for all matters relating to its internal economy and management, and for the maintenance of its discipline and the efficient performance of all its duties.' His various assistants and subordinates of all ranks, together with their work, will be discussed at length in subsequent chapters.

Such, then, in its simplest outlines, is the Police hierarchy of a province. The Criminal Investigation Department, the Railway Police, and other specialized developments of the Police Department will be dealt with in their appropriate places. They are omitted for the present for fear of blurring the picture which it is desired to present, the picture of a completely centralized, non-popularly controlled organization of a type which varies in many important respects from our English theory of Police but which has resemblances to certain continental police systems. The English reader will notice that no mention is made of municipal or city Police Forces. Here and there a municipality maintains a few men who are called Municipal Police, but their duties are confined entirely to watch and ward. They may not investigate crime or perform any other of the varied duties of the regular Police. They are, in fact, nothing more than uniformed *chowkidars* or watchmen. Moreover, the discipline and control of these men are in the hands of the Superintendent of Police of the district in which the municipality is situated, not in those of the Municipal Committee. In India there is nothing analogous to the authority of the Watch Committees over the Police of their boroughs. Any complaint against the Police or any representation regarding police administration which any local self-governing body may wish to make must be made to the appropriate officer of the Provincial Government.

The Police Forces in India are organized on a provincial basis because the responsibility for law and order and for the prevention and detection of crime rests on the Provincial Governments. They have not delegated that responsibility to the local self-governing bodies—the municipalities and district local boards—which they have created.

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There is one great advantage in the organization of the Police Force on a provincial as opposed to a more local basis. It makes for co-ordination and economy. Co-ordination is of great importance for the purpose of dealing with criminals whose operations extend over large areas. This is obviously the case with individual criminals, and, *a fortiori*, with the gangs of robbers called dacoits with whom the Indian Police are constantly called upon to deal. Economy results, since large-scale operations are often necessary to deal with social unrest which finds expression in tumult and crime, and may extend over the whole or the greater part of a province. At the beginning of 1915, for example, the Mahomedan peasantry of the Mozaffargarh District in the Punjab rose *en masse* against their Hindu neighbours. The small district Police Force was quite unable to cope with such a widespread disturbance, but it was at once strongly reinforced by the reserves from other districts and the disorder was easily suppressed. Under any system of local police there would, at best, have been great delay before reserves could have been collected from a number of independent local bodies. Some would have protested that their own immediate needs were paramount, and that they could not spare reinforcements for other and distant places whose welfare was not their concern. There would, under such a system, be delay and uncertainty which is fatal in such an emergency. Consequently, each local body would feel the need for maintaining greater local reserves than is necessary under the present system.

In the alternative, the Provincial Government would have to step in whenever the local resources were insufficient to meet the local situation. If such action were frequent it would impair local responsibility. It would involve military action, and the frequent employment of troops on police duties is open to many objections from a military and from a social point of view. It is also expensive.

Under the present system comparatively small reserves can be maintained in the different districts because they can be readily reinforced in times of stress from other parts of the



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province where no emergency exists. The organization of the Police on a provincial basis acts like the reserves of a bank on which a large superstructure of credit can be built. Reinforcements are available for all emergencies, communal rioting and other disturbances, famines, floods, epidemics of disease or other widespread calamities with which the Indian Police are constantly required to deal. Of even greater importance is the fact that the central machinery exists—the officers with the power to move the reserves at once and with the responsibility for the welfare of the whole province.

There are, however, three important exceptions to the rule that the Indian Police are organized on a provincial basis. The great city-ports of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras grew out of the special circumstances of trade with Europe, and thus have an historical background which differentiates them from the rest of India. They have long been too big and too important for their Police Forces to be merged in the provincial organizations.

In place of the district system with the Police subject to general control by the District Magistrate, the City Police Forces are under the direction and control of a Commissioner of Police who is directly subordinate to the Provincial Government. They are administered under separate Police Acts applicable to each city.

The Commissioners of Police in Calcutta and Bombay hold the two most onerous, responsible and exacting posts in the whole of India. The Police Force of Calcutta numbers 5,700 officers and men, that of Bombay 4,000 officers and men.

These two great ports, each inhabited by over 1,000,000 people, are the main arteries of trade between India and the outside world. Immense quantities of merchandise pass through them. The total trade of India is worth something like 400 million pounds annually, and of this great total Calcutta commands about 190 million, and Bombay 120 million.

This trade attracts merchants and traders from every continent and every nation, as well as from every part of India.

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Bombay and Calcutta have their banks and their stock exchanges in intimate touch with all the other great financial centres of the world; their markets for bullion and precious metals, jewellery and precious stones; their dealers in every commodity of international commerce. Calcutta has its monopoly of the jute trade and its 70 jute mills; Bombay its cotton markets in hourly touch with Manchester and New York, and its 100 cotton mills.

All these activities have brought together in a small area fabulously wealthy merchants, native and foreign, turbulent industrial populations, numerous small traders and professional men, and adventurers of all sorts hoping to win wealth by labour or by guile on the pavements of the cities.

Thus these cities act as magnets to attract the most hardened criminals of all the criminal classes of Asia. They have incredible underworlds, sordid, inflammable and incurable, whose people, the *goondas* of Calcutta and the *mawalis* of Bombay, are men who live by trading in every kind of human vice: chicanery, fraud, drugs, women, murder—the whole gamut of evil. There are many who have spent, perhaps, 40 years of adult life in Bombay, nearly half of it in jail, with 15 to 20 convictions; and for every crime at which they are caught they have probably committed a dozen others.

Fierce communal riots between Hindus and Mahomedans; strikes flaring up in an instant into riot with arson and murder; sudden stabbing affrays involving foreign seamen, Chinese, Somalis, or Negroes; stabbing affrays in the underworld; highly organized and profitable gambling; pockets picked of pearls worth thousands of pounds; bales of cloth stolen by the cartload from warehouses; armed robbery in the streets, and every form of modern or ancient rascality are all in the day's work for the City Police.

All these things necessitate strongly organized, centrally controlled Police Forces, under officers armed by law with powers to deal with emergencies as they arise. Executive and administrative control over the City Police is therefore centralized in the hands of one man. The City Police organiza-

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tion is and must be distinct from the provincial organization under the administrative control of the Inspector-General, and with executive authority and responsibility diffused among a number of local officers.

Co-operation between the two is, of course, necessary. The fact that the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioners belong to the same Imperial Service which supplies the highest officers of the provincial organization—interchanges being fairly frequent—is sufficient to ensure this, apart from the provisions of the law and the regulations of the Governments.

Such, then, are the Police Forces at the disposal of the Governments of the Indian Provinces, and the reasons for the maintenance of the organizations on a provincial basis.

To complete our picture it is necessary to describe the police arrangements of Indian States, and to say something about the co-operation between their forces and our own police. Since every province in British India has Indian States within its limits and on its borders, the efficiency and attitude of the police of these states are a matter of more than theoretical interest.

The Indian States afford the widest contrasts in wealth, size and organization. There are great, progressive States like Hyderabad, Gwalior and Baroda where an observer would not notice any very sharp contrasts in administrative methods and efficiency between them and the neighbouring parts of British India. From these we descend by almost imperceptible gradations through the more important States of Southern and Western India via small, but well-organized States like Tonk, Alwar and Patiala to mere *Gutsbezirke* like Lawa in Rajputana, with its 19 square miles of territory, and the tiny hill States of Simla, where administrative organization on Western lines is necessarily out of the question.

It will readily be perceived that the existence of these Indian States around and between British districts greatly complicates our police problem in India. It would be intolerable, of course, if they were allowed to serve as Alsacias

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for criminals who made a living by harrying the adjoining parts of British India, and yet, in the absence of well-organized and efficient Police Forces of their own, this is precisely the character which these States must assume. Therefore, often under pressure from the Indian Government, but also, to the credit of the rulers of the more important States be it said, on their own initiative, during the last few decades the States have gradually built up a number of Police Forces which are organized, trained and disciplined on the British model. Men and officers of these States forces go to the Police Training Schools of the neighbouring provinces for training. They use the various provincial Finger-Print Bureaux and employ the services of officers, both European and Indian, superior and subordinate, of the British Indian Police. Indeed, most Indian States of any pretensions retain permanently the services of an experienced officer of the Indian Police, either in executive control or as adviser to their own forces.

Thus, the British Indian system and ideals of Police have spread over the whole of India, even to those parts which are outside British executive control. Naturally, the co-operation between the Police of an Indian State and the Police of a neighbouring British tract is not as close as the co-operation between two British districts. Also, it is no disparagement to the States to say that the training and professional efficiency of their police is not everywhere equal to that of the Indian Police. So, to some extent, the existence of Indian States on the borders of and inside our provinces leaves certain chinks in our police armour. Dacoits and thieves can still issue occasionally from the fastnesses of States, and return to a comparatively safe retreat after harrying our districts, but such a process cannot be unduly prolonged. Sooner or later, the authorities of the State concerned are moved to ensure the co-operation of their Police with ours, and the consequent removal of the immediate cause of complaint. It is not often that any differences arise between the Police of an Indian State and a British district which are sufficiently serious to

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warrant the intervention of even the Provincial Government. The State and district authorities concerned can usually settle their differences without any outside interference. The prevalent practice of holding meetings of the Police officials of British Districts and adjoining States is productive of much mutual good feeling, and paves the way for co-operation against the breakers of the law. In fact, for the purpose of dealing with the criminal who would laugh at administrative boundaries, the provincial organization is rounded off and complemented by the Police Forces of contingent Indian States, which, like their model, are centrally organized and controlled.

Thus the traveller will find these organized Police Forces throughout the length and breadth of India—British India and Indian India. If he has crossed from outer Asia, from a country under autocratic rule like Afghanistan, under tribal rule as in Baluchistan or the territory of the Afridis, or under loose semi-military Oriental rule as in China, he will recognize how they stamp the whole sub-continent with the hall-mark of a great idea.

The germ of that idea is not what our enemies call 'British Imperialism', but freedom—equal freedom for every man on his lawful occasions.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

**J**UST AS the Army is divided into 'Commissioned' and 'Non-Commissioned' ranks, the Indian Police has its 'Gazetted' and 'Non-Gazetted' grades. A further complication is introduced by the division of the higher grades of the Police in India into the 'Imperial' and 'Provincial' Services. All these terms require some explanation.

The use of the term 'Gazetted' in this connexion will be readily understood on the analogy of the *London Gazette*, in which are published the appointments, promotions and so on relating to the commissioned officers of the Army, while similar details concerning other ranks are published in their own regimental or departmental orders. 'Gazetted' officers in the Indian Police, then, are those of superior standing whose appointments and other details are chronicled in the *Government Gazette* of the province in which they are serving.

The titles of these Gazetted officers in order of seniority are Inspector-General, Deputy Inspector-General, District Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent. Of these all save the Deputy Superintendent belong to the 'Imperial' Police Service which is the 'Indian Police Service' properly so called. It is convenient to call the whole body of Constabulary in India 'the Indian Police', but in strict fact the Deputy Superintendents and all ranks below them belong to the different provincial Police Forces and wear the badges of their own province. There are considerable variations in the uniform worn in the different provinces: for instance, the Bombay City Police strike arrivals at the sea-gate of India by their bright yellow headgear and yellow facings on blue uniform, while

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the men of the provincial Police in the Bombay districts wear khaki, those of the Punjab khaki, red and blue, and so on. The officers of the Imperial Service wear the same uniform and the same badges throughout India.

The officers of the Imperial Service are appointed by the Secretary of State for India in Council. Those of the Provincial Services are appointed by their own Provincial Governments. At present an overwhelming proportion of the officers of the Imperial Service are British, and in fact, while the competitive examination for the Indian Civil Service and those for the other Services under the Crown in India have long been open to Indians, that for the Police was until recently only open, like the Army, to men of British parentage. It was thrown open to Indians and to men of mixed parentage as a result of the report of the Public Services Commission of 1912. The Lee Commission, which reported in 1924, recommended that the proportion of Indian officers in the Imperial Service should be fixed at 50 per cent. of the total, this proportion to be worked up to gradually and attained by the year 1939. These changes reflect changes in the conditions in India, where men capable of filling the position and discharging the duties of a superintendent were once virtually unobtainable, as well as changes in the views of British authorities and in Indian public opinion resulting from the changed conditions.

Prior to 1895 recruitment to the Imperial Service—which name was, in fact, then not used—was almost entirely by nomination tempered by a simple examination. Promotion from the lower ranks of the Service was very rare, probably not more than 2 per cent. of the places being filled in that way. The nominees themselves were of uneven quality.

On the first introduction of the Constabulary Police in 1861, the majority of posts in the new department, including all the highest offices, were given to officers of the Indian Army, and they continued to be filled from this source for some time. These were the men who established the present police system in India. Side by side with them entered



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another type of man, a type which has been portrayed for us by Trollope and other lesser lights of the Victorian age—the amiable detrimental, the younger son, or the sporting public school boy, too lazy or too stupid to get into the Army, but prepared to go anywhere or do anything which did not involve prolonged drudgery. The supply of Indian Army officers for the Police gradually dwindled until it dried up almost completely during the 'eighties, after which practically all appointments went to the 'nomination-wallahs' of the types just described. They and their class more than any others have extended the bounds of the Empire and borne it on their shoulders.

During the first two decades of the existence of the new Police they were adequate assistants and colleagues of the military men who were directing the provincial forces. Conditions were simple and work was light. From the British police officer little more was demanded than the possession of the character of an English gentleman. The Provincial Governments wanted men whom the rank and file of the Police could know to be impartial and upright, fair dispensers of promotion and postings, and just maintainers of discipline. Their scope was, however, somewhat severely limited, and, naturally, ambitious and able men went either for the Army or for the Indian Civil Service in preference to the Police. The point is made, vividly enough, in one of Kipling's stories, of which the action takes place in the 'eighties, when he says, 'A clever Chinn passes for the Bombay Civil Service . . . a dull Chinn enters the Police Department or the Woods and Forests.'

From the middle 'eighties onwards the conditions of service in India, and particularly in the Indian Police, changed greatly. The large extension of communications, the growth of education in English and the consequent influence of Western thought on increasingly larger sections of Indians, easier and more frequent intercourse between India and the rest of the civilized world—these and other factors were beginning to produce momentous and inevitable reactions.



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Indian life was ceasing to be so much a matter of custom. Something else than submission to arbitrary authority, whether spiritual or temporal, rose above the horizon of the popular mind.

The administration of the provinces had to keep pace with these movements in the life of their peoples. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that these influences so completely permeated the mass of the people as to change their life or their outlook into something entirely new. Even now, fifty years later—fifty years which have seen far greater changes—custom and tradition still have immense influence. The untouchables are still untouchable among the Hindus; Sindhi peasants still bow in abject submission to touch the feet of tribal chiefs or living Mahomedan saints; men still sometimes destroy their female children; Bhils still hold witch-hunts; and widows still—in a microscopical number of cases—earn sanctity by self-immolation.

Nevertheless, from the middle 'eighties onwards a change in India became more and more evident. British officers were not uninfluenced, but reacted in the same directions. It had been said of them in a former generation that they mostly tended to become either definitely hinduized or definitely muslimized in cultural sympathies. This tendency had practically disappeared, although as late as the 'nineties there were rare survivals who had taken Mahomedan wives, or, in one or two cases at least, accepted Islam. Such extreme cases of identifying themselves with the lives, customs and religion of the peoples among whom they lived had, of course, always been the exception; but many men had studied them closely, and, more cut off from England than their successors, had been deeply influenced. Sanskrit literature or Arabic learning, Hindu philosophy or Islamic doctrine were capable of making a serious appeal to men with intellectual interests. Closer contact with life at home meant less close contact with cultural influences from which Indians themselves were slowly turning with the spread of English education and English ideas.

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The general tendency was to discard easy-going ways and to aim at more modern standards of administration. Every department of Government had to help to take the strain, and we see increasing stringency and more insistence on efficiency in the work of the main Indian services, until Lord Curzon inaugurated his vast series of administrative reforms as a clear sign that the Indian Government henceforth was to demand from its servants the same quality of work as their brothers gave in the public services in England.

Tried by these standards, the Indian Police were, to be frank, wanting in many respects. It was not entirely their fault. Every branch of the department from top to bottom was undermanned, and the conditions of service were such as to discourage initiative and ambition. The cleverest and most highly connected of the British officers escaped into the Indian Political Service, into various Colonial services or into Police Forces in other parts of the Empire where their energies found wider scope.

Under the new conditions the defects in the system of recruitment for the Imperial Indian Police became increasingly apparent, and in 1895 the nomination system was almost entirely abolished. It was succeeded by the present system of recruitment by competitive examination. Lord Curzon's Police Commission of 1902-03 made further improvements in the administration of the department and in the prospects of all its ranks.

Up to the outbreak of the War, the Indian police examination was the same as that for admission to Sandhurst, save that the age limit, 19-21, was higher. It was thus much easier than the Indian Civil Service examination, but its more limited scope was balanced by the corresponding keenness of the competition. It was comparatively rare for a man to get into the Indian Police straight from school. Most candidates had spent one or two years at one of the better-known cramming institutions, or had put in one or two terms at Oxford or Cambridge, while a sprinkling came from the Scottish or provincial universities. The general

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intellectual and educational level of these 'competition-wallahs' was distinctly high, and the men who came into the Indian Police between 1895 and 1914 had no need to fear comparison with those of other services. The Police in India with the leaven of their influence rose from the nadir of 1902 to the efficient, self-respecting, loyal and disciplined corps which has earned the admiration and respect of Englishmen and Indians for its work and bearing in the troublous years since the War.

After 1914 recruiting was, of course, suspended. In order speedily to fill the gaps in the ranks of British officers when the Armistice once more made this possible, recourse was had to nomination from among ex-officers of the British and Indian Armies. As soon as the gaps had been filled the system of recruitment by competitive examination was re-instituted, and, as a result of the great political changes effected by the Government of India Act of 1919, the Police examination like that for the Indian Civil Service is now held simultaneously in England and in India. Owing to the fact that some Indian communities are educationally less qualified than others, it was decided that, in order to ensure that the more backward communities should not remain unrepresented in the services, the examination in India should be tempered by nomination or reservation of places for such communities.

Such in broad outline is the history of recruitment to the Imperial Indian Police Service.

Unlike his colleagues in other services, the young police officer spends no time under training in England after appointment. He is sent out to India at once to be instructed in the vernaculars, in law, drill, and departmental rules at the Police Training School of the province to which he is attached. Every major province in India has its Police Training School. The administration of these schools naturally varies in detail from province to province, but the rules for the initial training of Imperial officers are broadly uniform throughout India.

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The staff of the school consists of selected inspectors under a superintendent, and from them the young officer receives instruction in criminal law and procedure, and in the court vernacular of the province. He also goes through a course of Infantry drill and riding. An examination has to be passed in all these subjects, failure to reach the prescribed standard within two years involving removal from the Service. In some provinces the officer is posted to a district to receive practical training and experience in the work of a Police Force during his period of probation. In this case he is not given any duty or work involving responsibility, but is employed under the personal supervision of the Superintendent. He goes on tour with his chief, attends at his inspection of police stations, at Orderly Room and other more serious inquiries into reports against subordinates, and at his visits to the scenes of important criminal investigations. He is required to study the local vernacular and, as he becomes sufficiently familiar with this, he attends the magistrates' Courts to watch proceedings and to make briefs of the more important cases. This part of the training is calculated to give him an insight into practical affairs, and by the time he has passed the various tests and examinations, which usually takes about 18 months, he is well on the way to becoming a useful cog in the great machine. Before the War, when there was no shortage of experienced officers, the young officer usually served as an Assistant Superintendent for five or six years, during which time he received a thorough grounding in his work, before undertaking the responsibility of holding charge of a District. As an Assistant Superintendent he held semi-independent charge of a sub-division of a district with limited powers and under the supervision of his chief. In the conditions of the last few years it has not always been possible for the period of preparation to be so extended, and officers with only three or four years' service have often officiated as District Superintendent. Generally speaking, they have filled this position of real responsibility with success, but it is natural that the older men should sometimes

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shake their heads and say that the work of such young officers, and consequently the efficiency of the whole force, has suffered from their lack of sufficient grounding. During the first few years of his service the young officer, if he has the right qualities, gradually becomes aware that he inherits great, but unspoken, traditions. He learns among other things that he will only earn the respect of his fellows and of his subordinates if he never shirks responsibility, and never judges hastily or without hearing both sides.

The whole period spent as an assistant is virtually a period of training, and it would be impossible for the Training Schools to do more than serve as a preliminary introduction to a career in which both the young Englishman and, now, the young Indian have so much to learn. Indians who are directly appointed to the Imperial Service in India go through the same course at the Training School as their British brother officers. An important part of this course is the life in the Officers' Mess, which is run on the same lines as a regimental mess. All the officers in a province belong to the Mess, where corporate traditions are kept alive by such things as the presentation of silver by officers who have passed through the school, or, for instance, as in the mess at Nasik in the Bombay Presidency, by the Colours of an old Satara Battalion, by a Bhil drum from the Headquarters of the Bhil Corps founded by Sir James Outram in Khandesh in the 'thirties of last century, and by 'Outram's call' blown on the bugles on mess nights. Both these old corps disappeared many years ago, being merged in the Police Forces of those districts, although the Bhils who compose the armed Police of the Khandesh District still invariably refer to themselves as the 'Bhil Corps'.

Thus the present is linked with the past. Outram's success in attracting the Bhils to join a corps whose duty it was to keep order, played a great part in bringing these primitive people under civilizing influences. In this the British succeeded where their predecessors, the Maratha rulers of Khandesh, had failed.

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The Bhil drum in the Mess at Nasik serves as an introduction to this fragment of local history, and thus creates some part of the atmosphere in which the young officer commences his work. The atmosphere of the immediate present is one of strenuous mental and physical training. There are ordinarily from sixty to a hundred young Indians of the English-knowing classes undergoing training for appointment to the rank of Police Sub-Inspector. Drill, riding and lectures, with intervals for organized games, occupy a full day. The officers of the Imperial Service learn their drill on the same parade-ground, ride with them in the same riding school, and play in the same games; but law lectures and instruction in languages are necessarily given separately.

The gazetted officer of the Provincial Service, the Deputy Superintendent of Police, is a man of different standing and origin from his *confrère* of the Imperial Service. In the first place, this rank is primarily intended for men promoted from the lower grades. It was instituted after the 1902 Commission, chiefly in order to provide these lower grades with an object of ambition.

Before Indians were admitted to the examination for the Imperial Service, a direct appointment to the rank of Deputy Superintendent was occasionally given to an Indian of good family, or even more rarely to a European domiciled in India or to an Anglo-Indian of mixed descent. These officers went through a similar course of training to that described above, but they were not members of the Officers' Mess. After leaving the Training School they naturally took their place at the bottom of the deputies' cadre, with the result that it was usually only after some fifteen years' service that they found themselves within reach of promotion to the rank of District Superintendent. Even then they only reached it after a process of rigorous selection, while the British or Indian Assistant Superintendent, who is recruited expressly to fill that rank, reaches it after five or six years and as a matter of course. The Deputy Superintendent who



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has been promoted from the non-gazetted grades can only hope to reach it after much longer service and towards the end of his official life, for officers of all ranks leave the service at the age of fifty-five.

Next below the Deputy Superintendent comes the Inspector. Direct appointments to this rank have been very rare in most or all provinces, but they were made some years ago, during a transitional period before policy had crystallized, with a view to attracting men of good family into a department of the public service which was then somewhat conspicuous for their absence.

This latter object was also achieved by the success attained in attracting men of family and standing to the rank of Sub-Inspector. India is not a democratic country; and the Police as a whole undoubtedly rose greatly in public estimation as a result of this policy which was one of the main consequences of the 1902 Commission. Prior to that change the officer in charge of a police station was a man who had risen from the lowest ranks. A large proportion of them were poorly educated. Some were able to discharge their duties, in spite of being totally illiterate, in the circumstances of Indian life in the nineteenth century. Towards the end of that century the same great causes which led to the arrival of the 'examination-wallah' in the Imperial Service rendered the hard-bitten, narrow but often wonderfully capable, old-fashioned police-station officer out of date. He had changed very little from the almost invariably corrupt and often tyrannical official of Moghul days. He belonged to a better-organized administrative system, and he had to work under an all-pervading code of law; but in all the essentials of character and human nature he was a child of those wild times of the eighteenth century when men descended from the nobility of Akbar the Great, or from Shivaji's wild Maratha horsemen, rode sword in hand through Hindustan.

If English education and English ideas of law and liberty brought the need for a different type of police officer, they also helped to produce the men. Graduates were being

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turned out from the colleges of the Indian Universities in increasingly larger numbers. There was some difficulty about making a beginning. Men of this type had, however, entered the Police here and there, and as soon as the Training Schools were opened, in about the year 1905, they began to come into the service in a steadily increasing stream. From the first it was impressed on them by their Imperial officers that they were expected to bring about an improvement in the morale and in the public reputation of the Police.

This they have done under the inspiration and guidance of their British officers; and in doing so they have made no small contribution to the progress of India. They have played a great part in that staunchness and steadiness of the Police in India, at a time when such large sections of Indian opinion lost their balance in the course of the feverish political oscillations of the last few years.

The duties of these officers will be described later on, when the importance of their part in the whole will become clearer. Recruitment to this grade is by selection, chiefly from young men who have matriculated at the Universities, and to a smaller extent from picked men from the lower ranks. The exact procedure varies in different provinces, but, in general, applicants have to satisfy the District Superintendent of their native district, in the case of men not in the Service, that they have the requisite social and educational qualifications. They have next to appear for an interview before a Board of senior police officers or before a Deputy Inspector-General for final selection. Those selected are medically examined, and, if passed, sent to the Training School, where, as has already been explained, they go through a strenuous course. Some are weeded out as being wanting in character or capacity during the first six months at the school, each case being very fully considered by the Principal of the school subject to revision by the Inspector-General. A few more are, perhaps, removed for similar reasons during the remaining twelve months of the course,



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of the Public Prosecutor or a lawyer of special eminence. He begins by helping to keep the office registers, and next, under guidance, examines and checks the briefs and papers from the police stations. Later he prepares briefs himself and works as an assistant to the Inspector in Court. Finally he conducts a case.

He works at the Police Headquarters, where he studies the working of the office which issues stores, clothing, ammunition, accoutrements and similar requirements to the fifteen or twenty police stations of the district. Here also he watches in detail the training of the armed Police and the methods by which their discipline is maintained.

He is attached to the Superintendent's office, and works in the different branches; in the English office, the accountant's office, the record-room and the vernacular office. As an assistant to the Reader in the vernacular office he is brought into contact with the very varied doings of the Police all over the district. He hears, or perhaps as deputy to the Reader, reads to the Superintendent, reports of offences and crime diaries and the vast flood of vernacular reports in which are mirrored the daily life and circumstances of the police stations. Besides dealing with crime, these reports relate to problems concerning men who want leave and their reliefs, or the state of repair of lines and offices, or relations between police and magistracy, police and public, police and military, or the numerous petitions of persons who are or think themselves aggrieved at the hands of their neighbours or the subordinate police, and innumerable other matters. In this way the young officer sees something of the marvellous variety of human interests which pass through the great machine of which he is to be a small but vital part. Almost as important, he sees how the Superintendent deals with all these matters as they come before him, how he has his finger on the pulse of the district, what pleases him, what annoys him, and how he deals out reward and punishment.

He works at a police station, performing at first the humbler duties of a clerk. He helps to keep the registers, of which

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there are quite a surprising number, and generally makes himself acquainted with the routine work of the station. He hears, and under careful supervision (for the First Information Report is of special importance) may be allowed to record, information regarding the commission of offences. Having mastered all this he is ready to go out with the officer in charge of the police station to watch him investigate cases and to learn to perform such general duties as may be assigned to him.

If there is a turning-point in the career of a young sub-inspector, this is it. The question of corruption is one of constant and anxious concern to every District Superintendent. It must be discussed in its proper place. Here it will suffice to say that the methods and character of his first tutor in the investigation of crime must have a profound influence on the future work and behaviour of a young officer. If he sees corrupt but lucrative practices carried on with apparent impunity, he cannot be otherwise than tempted to follow the example before his eyes. It must be remembered that, for ages before the rise of the British power in India, the officers of Government—as can be seen from contemporary records both native and foreign—were expected to make a living out of their charges. Provided that he does not accuse people unjustly, there are many ways in which a sub-inspector can make considerable sums by stooping to the receipt of illegal gratifications without incurring odium among the people and without causing complaint to be made to the Superintendent or the District Magistrate.

On the other hand, if his tutor is a good specimen of the many good men who entered the service after 1902, men of high social standing, of some private means and of uncompromising self-respect, he has every chance of developing into that most valuable of all public servants, especially in India, a practical, efficient, and upright police-station officer, whose value is quite literally beyond computation.

Thus we leave the Sub-Inspector, for the present, at the parting of the ways, about to enter on his real career as a

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police officer by working as an additional investigating officer for one year. If he does this to the satisfaction of his superiors he will be recommended for confirmation in the Service by his District Superintendent. He will then have been through a course of training lasting nearly four years, which is both thorough and exacting. Those who survive are material of which good officers can be made.

The principle of direct appointment by selection also applies, but on a more restricted scale, to the grade of Head Constable, which is the next below that of Sub-Inspector. The Head Constable corresponds to the English rank of Sergeant, as is indicated by three stripes worn on the arm. The object of making such direct appointments is to obtain a better class than is forthcoming for enlistment as constable, but many District Superintendents are opposed to the principle on the ground that it destroys or weakens the incentives to good and honest work on the part of the lowest ranks of the force. Conditions as to the standard of education among men who present themselves for enlistment as constables are not the same in all provinces, but they are everywhere improving, with the result that the reasons for direct appointment to the rank of Head Constable are generally disappearing.

The men who present themselves before the District Superintendent for enlistment as constables are characteristically known as '*umedwar*', which may be translated as 'hopefuls'. They are everywhere a mixed assembly of raw youths from the fields—true clodhoppers—discharged short-term soldiers and school-bred boys, some of whom have passed the matriculation examination of their local university. These last have only been included in very recent years, and are more numerous in some provinces than in others.

Almost without exception the recruits belong to the better strata of Indian society. Men of the menial classes, the depressed classes, the untouchables, the sweepers, have generally been debarred from employment in the Police.

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To reformers who would press the claims of these classes to equal recognition in all respects the authorities have always replied that they cannot proceed in advance of public opinion, and that they cannot agree to such a vitally important public service as the Police taking the lead in a matter in which there are many practical difficulties. They have suggested that when Hindu opinion generally has no objection to a man of high caste being touched or to his house being searched by such a man, there will be no difficulty in the way of their employment.

As already stated, the ranks are filled almost entirely by men of the peasant classes. In India as elsewhere these men are the backbone of the country. It is they who in every country have preserved unimpaired the archaic force of the race, who have repaired the wastages of war, of tumult or of life in the cities. These are the men who make the strongest appeal to the sympathies of their British officers. In the Police, as in the Indian Army, there are unbreakable bonds between them of loyalty on the one hand and respect on the other. There is nothing finer in the world than the relations between the sepoy and his sahib, and it need not be ignored that, one way and another, during three centuries, they have toiled together, fought together and died together. The Police, of course, is not a fighting force as the Army is, but the relations between the officers and the men are on the same lines. The types are the same in both cases. In all this long story of the association of British and Indians together in these capacities, the mere existence of the Indian Police Service at its present level is an episode—an episode only, but one which reflects honour on both races. It represents not the least of the great British achievements in India.

The following incidents will illustrate and explain in some sense what is meant by this.

Not long ago when bands of trans-frontier raiders, perhaps thirty strong, were committing dacoity, that is, attacking villages under arms, and plundering the richer villages in the Larkana District of Sind, small parties of half a dozen armed

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policemen were posted in important places to give protection. The posts were linked up along the frontier by patrols of Mounted Police, whose duty was all the more trying since the raiders always came by night. Sometimes these small posts drove the raiders off without loss, and sometimes the raiders made a successful attack on an unprotected village.

On one occasion, by some series of accidents, two armed constables found themselves left to undertake the responsibility of protecting a group of villages. About midnight, the sounds of firing made it clear that a village about a mile away was being attacked. They attempted without success to collect a rescue party from the village they were in, and then set off to deal with the raiders unaided. On arriving outside Mado, the village which was being plundered, the senior constable took up a position behind a wall which served as a breastwork and commanded the main street of the bazaar where the raiders were busy collecting their plunder. He called out to the raiders to surrender as the Police had arrived! They replied that they were Muslims, and that as the Police were good Muslims too, they should not interfere. The two constables opened fire simultaneously with a broadside of strong language—always ready in the East—and the contents of two Martinis loaded with buck-shot. A few rounds were enough to put to flight the twenty-odd raiders, who fortunately did not wait to test the strength of the police party.

The District Superintendent happened to be encamped about ten miles away. He received the news of the raid in time to be in the saddle accompanied by a sub-inspector and five mounted policemen before daybreak. They followed the tracks of the raiders all day. Towards evening, having covered about twenty miles from Mado, they reached the hilly country on the frontier. These hills are rocky and waterless, except for occasional pools. The horses had to be sent back with two of the policemen, but the party had been augmented by two armed Baluchi landowners, who turned

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out to assist. From the direction taken by the raiders it appeared that they were making for a certain pool about four miles inside the hilly tract, and the Police pressed on to reach this before dark. Progress was necessarily slow as the tracks led them through rocky ravines, and they were in momentary danger of ambush. They had been out all day under a tropical sun—the shade temperature being above 105 degrees Fahrenheit, without food. The only water available since midday had been brackish. Another party of five armed Police on camels had been ordered to follow and to bring food and supplies, but they were probably three or four hours behind them. If they found the raiders at the water, it meant fighting a body of born hillmen, who outnumbered them by more than three to one, for the possession of that water. If they waited for the reinforcement, it might mean losing all chance of making contact with the raiders, and so letting them escape across the frontier which lay fifteen miles farther on at the summit of a long range of hills about 5,000 feet high.

They pushed on as cautiously as possible. When they reached the water, a ring of great cliffs, which would have concealed an army, surrounded them. The sudden nightfall of the tropics overtook them. To advance into the open near the water might mean annihilation in a trap. To send out scouts in the gathering darkness would split up the tiny party, and cover very little of the amphitheatre of hills.

However, two police sepoy had put the whole gang to flight the previous night, so they might not prove very stout. On the other hand, ambush was a favourite method in local tribal warfare.

As an anticlimax, the event proved that there was no one there. Shortly afterwards the armed party with the supplies came up, and were congratulated by their sahib on having made more rapid progress than he had thought possible. They were Punjabi Mahomedans under a Sikh Head Constable.

At sunrise the Police started for the next water, which was



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believed to be ten, but proved to be only five, miles distant. The raiders had evidently spent the night there. It was exasperating to have missed them. The only chance of catching them now was to continue the pursuit across the frontier. As this meant crossing into country belonging to a tribe then in a state of rebellion, the District Superintendent of Police considered a larger force necessary. On the first day he had sent a telegram from Mado for thirty armed Police from Headquarters to proceed to Harbab, a point on the main pass across the hills. He therefore moved across to intercept them. As he missed them in this rocky uninhabited country, and the existing orders strictly forbade his crossing the frontier except when in close pursuit—and he was now two days behind—he reluctantly recalled them.

On their arrival at his camp he paraded and inspected them. They were perfectly fit, in spite of an almost incredible marching performance. They had covered over sixty miles in thirty-six hours, rested twelve hours at Harbab, and then done forty-five miles to camp in the next thirty-six hours. These men were all Pathans under a Pathan officer, an ex-subheddar of the 126th Baluchistan Infantry. When they had broken off, they collected round their officers joking and chatting about the march and their disappointment at not coming up with the raiders, and the Head Constable, a Waziri, in reply to a question, remarked:

‘Sahib, why are you anxious about the sepoy’s feet? Is there any other job on?’

‘Yes, you have to go back to Harbab.’

‘When? At once?’

‘Yes, at once.’

‘Fall in,’ ordered the Head Constable, and the men, hearing what had been said, fell in still joking. The Sahib and the Subheddar smiled at one another, each knowing the other’s pleasure at the spirit of their men, and gave orders for them to fall out again and for them to have the first good meal they had had for over four days.

It must be remembered that the Police have no regular

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commissariat service for such occasions. In this case their food had been carried on camels, but for the whole of the 105-odd miles each man had carried his rifle, forty rounds and a water-bottle.

The District Superintendent of Police felt that he had reason to be pleased with the way in which the two constables had driven the raiders out of the village, with the haste the Punjabi party had made to come up with him, with the wonderful mobility and high spirits of the Subhedar and his Pathans, and he knew that much of it was in response to his own eagerness to deal the Brahui raiders such a blow as would make them hesitate to attack our villages again.

In most provinces in India a separate force of armed Police is maintained. The advantages of this system are apparent in dealing with incidents like these trans-frontier raids, or in operations against large gangs of dacoits, who from time to time take to the jungle as outlaws in all the provinces.

The armed Police know their British officers, who devote special attention to their discipline and training, and play games such as hockey with them. In most of the provinces annual sports are held at the headquarters of the province, when teams from the different districts compete for trophies for running, games, wrestling and shooting. These teams are generally drawn from the armed Police. The competitions have an excellent effect on the *esprit de corps* of each district, and they also produce a sense of the solidarity of the whole Provincial Police Force. They have the further advantage of enabling the officers to meet and discuss matters of professional interest in a way which would not be possible without some such organized meeting.

The unarmed Police, on the other hand, being scattered over the district at the various police stations, only see the District Superintendent or the assistant or deputy once or at the most two or three times a year. They are not trained so much to act together as to take action on their own initiative for the detection and prevention of offences and the col-



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lection of information likely to be useful to the Sub-Inspector in this connexion.

While illiterate men are quite useful in the armed Police, they are handicapped in many ways in the unarmed. Even in the unarmed branch the majority are still illiterate or very slightly educated in most provinces. As education is spreading, the proportion of men who can write a diary or a useful report is growing rapidly. Generally speaking, illiterate men are not now recruited in the unarmed Police, except in the more backward areas.

The would-be recruits are lined up before the District Superintendent at a police station or outside the Orderly Room at Headquarters. The educated produce their School certificates and all are questioned as to their connexions and origins, their replies being subsequently checked by local inquiry. A fair proportion are usually vouched for by relatives already in the Force. Some are turned down as being below the physical standard required, others, more rarely, as being too thick-witted to reply to a few simple questions.

Those selected are men who come of 'a decent family', usually of the peasant class, with physique, self-respect, pluck and, as a rule, a fair share of native intelligence. After a medical examination they are set to work to learn the elements of squad drill, general police duties and elementary law. The latter is very elementary in the case of the armed and more advanced for the others.

The physique of the recruit is of a standard slightly above that of the locality for which he is recruited. This varies considerably, since there are many ethnological types in India. For instance, the men of the Punjab or Sind average three inches or more above the Mahrattas or Madrassis in height. The appearance of a squad of police recruits would not, as a rule, do discredit to a regiment of the Indian Army. This statement may sound strange to English ears, since the physique of the Police in England is far better than that of the Regular Army. In England the pay, prospects and status in the Police are better than they are in the Army, but

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the reverse is the case in India. Except during the first days of the modern constabulary the pay of the Police has never been so good as that of the sepoy in the Indian Army.

The Police Commission of 1902 warned the Government of India of the dangers arising from inadequate pay in the Police, and an improvement was effected soon afterwards. Subsequent improvements in nominal pay failed from time to time to keep pace with the fall in the purchasing power of the rupee.

The Indian constable deserves well of his fellow-countrymen. His present standard of efficiency has been very gradually attained. If the conditions of service, in regard to pay and other matters, are allowed to deteriorate, there can be no doubt that all this hard-won improvement will be lost.

The factors which have made the improvements of the last thirty years possible have been the maintenance of a reasonable rate of pay (but it has never been maintained at a level which has satisfied the superior officers of the Service as being sufficient to enable them to attain the standards which they consider possible and desirable); secondly, the care taken to recruit the best types of men, and the admirable qualities of the men of the peasant classes when properly trained and led; thirdly, the improvements effected in the quality, training and professional attainments of the Deputies, Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors since 1902; and the supervision of the officers of the Imperial Service, in regard to whom it may be fairly claimed that their general level of capacity and character is a high one, and that as a Service, as a body of Chief Police Officers, they yield pride of place to no other body in the world.

If India loses much of this present efficiency in the lower ranks of the Police—and ultimately the quality, the reputation and the usefulness of the Force depend on the lower ranks—she loses something which concerns the interests and the manner of life of every Indian. Questions relevant to these issues will, therefore, assume greater prominence, as the development of new constitutional forms proceeds.

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We have considered the composition, the methods of recruitment and the systems for training all ranks of the great Indian Police Force, which is organized as we have seen on a provincial basis. We see the highest ranks of all, the officers of the Imperial Service, recruited almost entirely by competitive examination. Below them, the provincial gazetted officers, the Deputy Superintendents, have been obtained partly by nomination, but largely by promotion from the lower ranks. As we go down the hierarchy we see that the Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors are obtained by direct nomination, in rare cases to the higher, but generally to the lower of these two ranks, and that even the Head Constable or Sergeant grade is partly recruited in this way. To English eyes there is something very undemocratic about such a system as this, and English critics may imagine that the Force must be to some extent effete and inefficient, because the principle of competition has been so largely eliminated. Such an idea betrays a lack of acquaintance with the conditions of Indian life and society. In fact, it is claimed that this very system, by bringing in the higher classes in the higher ranks, and the lower classes in the lower ranks, has secured a standard of efficiency which would have been unattainable in any other way under those conditions.

In the first place, the work of an inspector or sub-inspector nowadays demands a degree of education not found among the mass of those who enlist as constables, the majority of whom are still illiterate or nearly so. Again, a firm principle in the social life of India, whether Hindu or Mahomedan India, is the right of the higher castes and classes to rule the lower. To an Indian there is something almost morally wrong in the subordination of a man of high birth and position to a man from a lower rank of society. As has already been mentioned, men of the menial classes have been debarred from enlisting as constables or as combatants in the Indian Army. (There have been battalions of Mahars—one of the depressed classes—but they were disbanded.) The rank and file of the Indian Army or the Police would

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strongly object to the presence of a washerman or a potter in their ranks. Mahars and other similar castes have been enlisted in certain very rare and special circumstances, but not without difficulties being created as a result. It is certain that the enlistment of a sweeper or a shoemaker would cause a mutiny among either Hindu or Mahomedan troops or police. So the direct appointment of men of good family to the higher non-gazetted ranks is not only necessary, because of the lack of the requisite education among the lower strata of society, but is thoroughly in accord with Indian sentiment and the ruling principles of Indian society. The same conditions have had the same consequences in all the Services, in the Army, in the magistracy, and even in the technical Services, where professional qualifications must be reinforced by social standing.

Once a man is in the Service, the principles of competition and the survival of the fittest have full play. Family, social rank and education may serve to give him his appointment, but after that his promotion depends on his work and merits.

Now that the highest ranks of the Service have been thrown open to Indians, the incentive to ambition is greater than ever. There have already been cases of men rising from Sub-Inspector to District Superintendent, and from Deputy Superintendent to officiate as Deputy Inspector-General. In one case a man rose from constable to Deputy Inspector-General.

We have already seen how the special conditions of the great cities have resulted in their Police Forces remaining outside the provincial organizations, but linked to them in various ways. Calcutta and Bombay both have considerable European resident populations,—the figures given in the last census report are 14,000 and 12,000 respectively—and they are visited by foreigners of all nations. European constables or sergeants have accordingly been employed there from the beginning. The soldiers of the British Army in India are amenable to the civil law in all matters not directly connected with military discipline. A soldier who rides a bicycle

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without a light at night, or behaves in a rowdy manner on the public road, or commits a theft, comes under the jurisdiction of the Civil Police. In places outside the large cities, wherever Europeans congregate in any numbers, European vagrants and European criminals are found from time to time. In most of such places, including the main railway stations, and in Cantonments, there are usually European inspectors and constables or sergeants.

In the provincial organizations these Police officers appear as a small special cadre maintained for a special type of police work. In the larger cities like Bombay they are an essential part of the main organization. Until comparatively recently all the officers in charge of police stations in Bombay City were of this class. The first Indian sub-inspectors in the City Police joined in 1910, and the first Indian was appointed to the charge of a police station in 1917. There had been Indian officers in the Criminal Investigation Department of the City Police since the 'sixties and some of them had built up a great reputation for themselves.

The Bombay City Police organization closely follows that of the Metropolitan Police. Under the Commissioner are four Deputy Commissioners who deal with different branches of the administrative control of the Force exercised from the Police Head Office, as deputies to the Commissioner who is solely responsible and is the fountain-head of authority in the Force. Under the Commissioner's orders and general control, then, one of these officers deals with discipline and general administration, the second with the working of the Criminal Investigation Department, the third with the Special Branch, and the fourth with various smaller branches including the Port, Pilgrim traffic between India and Arabia, Pay, Traffic problems, and the licensing of theatres and public vehicles.

The city is divided into a number of divisions, each under a superintendent who corresponds to, and ranks with, the Deputy Superintendent in the provincial cadre. In each division there are two or more police stations, each under an

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inspector, who is assisted by a deputy inspector and from four to eight investigating officers who are either Indian sub-inspectors or sergeants. The Sub-Inspectors are recruited in the same way as those in the districts, and they are trained at the Provincial Training School. The Sergeants are appointed, after an interview with the Deputy Commissioner, from applicants who are time-expired N.C.O.'s and soldiers of the British Army in India, or, in a small minority of cases, Europeans domiciled in India. These officers go through a short course of training in Hindustani and law at a police station, and after passing examinations receive practical instruction in the art of investigation. The ranks of Inspector and Superintendent are now being filled by promotion alternately from the cadres of Sergeant and Sub-Inspector. This will result, in the near future, in all these ranks being equally divided between Indians and Europeans.

Below these ranks, the Head Constables and constables are men of the same type as their brothers in the districts. Until a few years ago they received no training at all beyond elementary squad drill, and the majority of the older men are illiterate, but educated men are now being recruited. A small proportion of recent recruits have some knowledge of English, but the majority of the educated men only understand Marathi, which is one of the three languages commonly spoken in Bombay. A thorough course of training in elementary law and procedure has recently been arranged for the recruits as well as for men of some years' standing.

These facts will indicate the difficulties which have been experienced in organizing the lower ranks of the Police to meet the special circumstances of this hybrid city, with its mixture of modernity, wealth, industrialism, poverty and hooliganism. The Maratha peasantry, who compose by far the greater part of the industrial population, also fill the lower ranks of the City Police. These people have never quite adapted themselves to city life. They maintain contact with their villages and their land, and return to them at every opportunity.



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A disproportionately heavy share of the burden of carrying on the Police administration accordingly falls on the higher ranks, which are in every way more at home in their environment. They are, inevitably, overwhelmed with work, and considerable additions to the staff engaged in the investigation and prevention of crime would be required to cleanse these Augean stables. So far from spending money on the generous lines thus indicated, the local Government has been forced to economize in every possible direction for several years.

One of the measures taken to 'modernize' the City Police in recent years has been the establishment of a fleet of motor-vans and lorries for transport purposes. In order to obtain these, half of the Mounted Police Force had to be sacrificed. This is, of course, in conformity with modern tendencies, as the mounted branch has been reduced almost everywhere.

Mounted Police are still maintained in several parts of India. In one small province the staff employed at the district police stations is almost wholly mounted. This is Sind, of which it has been said with truth that even the beggars ride. The conditions are peculiar, in that horses and camels are the ordinary time-honoured means of transport, the distances very great, the roads almost non-existent, and the country sandy and to some extent desert. However, even Sind is now the victim of the motor-car.

Except for this special case, the Mounted Police are generally maintained for security purposes, rather than for police duties as generally understood. That is to say, they are used to keep order, to patrol roads, to round up dangerous gangs, or to disperse crowds, but not to investigate crime. Their training is, in such circumstances, similar to that of the armed Police and they carry carbines.

One of the picturesque survivals of India was the Mounted Police of the Thar and Parkar, the desert to the north of the Rann of Cutch. This Police Force had been raised as an Irregular Regiment in the 'forties of last century. The name of one 'Tyrwhit Sahib', which is still legendary in the Thar,

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is connected in the popular mind with its early days. The uniform, until 1912 or thereabouts, was of a pattern worn by Irregular Cavalry a hundred years ago, the colour being dark green with red facings and, in the case of the native officers, silver facings. They carried lances with red and green pennons, carbines and swords. Many stories of derring-do are told of the early days, when they were formed to rid the desert of some of those bands of desperadoes which had haunted it since the break-up of the Moghul power.

These traditions were worthily maintained, a few months ago, by a trooper who, leading two companions, fell upon a gang of a dozen dacoits among the sand-dunes, disarmed some, engaged single-handed in a series of truly homeric combats of cut and thrust, and persistently pursued those who fled until he had wounded or captured all but three or four of them. If he had been shorn of the red and green of the old Corps, he did not forget that he belonged to a Baluch tribe which had been its backbone for four generations and had never tolerated the presence of dacoits in the Thar,—for, until Tyrwhit Sahib tamed them, these same Baluchis had regarded robbery under arms in the Thar as their own prerogative.



## CHAPTER V

### THE DISTRICT POLICE

**T**HE DISTRICT in India is, at first sight, suggestive of something on the lines of an English county; but it is frequently five or six times as large. There are 216 districts in the nine provinces of British India, and most of them have an area of between 2,000 and 5,000 square miles. The density of population varies considerably between province and province, and between one district and another in the same province. There are immense divergences in regard to the racial types of the inhabitants, their modes of life, their staple foods and the geographical conditions of their environment.

All these things are discussed in various books of reference and need not be exhaustively repeated here. The fact of the existence of these divergences should be constantly borne in mind, if only because they make generalizations in most matters impossible, while the administrative unity makes generalization in certain matters easy.

If the Police are organized on a provincial basis, the district is the administrative and executive unit; and this is true not only of the Police, but also in regard to most other public services. At the headquarters of each district there are the offices of a number of officials, whose jurisdiction generally coincides. The head of the district, the Deputy Commissioner, or, as he is called in most provinces, the Collector and District Magistrate, is responsible for the general welfare of the people, and in particular for all matters connected with the collection of revenue and the assessment of agricultural land, for the working of the magistracy, and for the maintenance of good order. He is directly or indirectly concerned with almost everything which goes on in the district. The

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Sessions Judge presides at the Court of Sessions and deals with appeals from the decisions of the Lower Courts. The Civil Surgeon is in charge of an important hospital in the headquarters town and in administrative control of, perhaps, fifteen smaller hospitals in the district. An officer of the Indian Service of Engineers is responsible for irrigation works, or for the roads and government buildings, and a Forest Officer for the maintenance of the forests. For obvious reasons the areas under the control of the officers of the Irrigation and Forest Departments do not as a rule exactly coincide with that of the district.

Under each of these officers there are others with separate territorial jurisdiction. It would be tedious to enumerate them all, but roughly speaking there are some ten or twelve tehsils, or talukas, in a district, and at the chief town of each tehsil there are a magistrate, a sub-judge, an assistant surgeon, as well as sub-inspector of police, and sometimes a subordinate engineer or forest official. Three or four tehsils constitute a subdivision of a district, and the subdivisional officers are ordinarily junior officers of the Indian Civil Service, the Indian Police, or the Provincial Civil and Police Services, but these details vary from time to time and in different places.

One essential difference between an English county and an Indian district is that the former is a living entity with its roots in the historical beginnings of our nationhood, while the latter is artificial and its boundaries merely a matter of administrative convenience. As such, these boundaries can be and frequently are altered, especially in those parts of India where great irrigation projects alter the conditions by increasing the area under cultivation. Homogeneity of population and local sentiment have not been considerations of any importance in the shaping of Indian districts. Partly as a cause of this, and partly as a result of it, many districts exhibit a surprising diversity of racial, religious and even cultural elements. Striking instances of this nature are to be seen in the country of the Kanarese peoples, which is divided

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between two provinces, the district of North Kanara being in Bombay and that of South Kanara in Madras; or in the Hazara District of the North-West Frontier, the population of which includes peoples with such diverse characteristics as Pathans, Kashmiris and Punjabis. If Hazara is an extreme case, there are many other districts in which almost equally diverse elements are represented, and there are very few with an entirely homogeneous population. It is as if the counties and peoples of, say, Sussex, Cornwall, and Lancashire were included in a single administrative area.

The reason for labouring this argument is to make it plain that the average Indian district is a little world of its own, a tiny replica of the heterogeneity of India, reproducing, in its own life and in the problems which it presents to its rulers, much of the complexity of the problem of Indian administration as a whole. Again, there is hardly a district which has not suffered in one form or another from communal friction between Hindus and Mahomedans. Almost everywhere some other community which does not entirely coalesce with its neighbours—such as the Sikhs in the Punjab, a powerful Baluchi tribe like the Magsis in Sind, the Moplahs in Madras, aboriginal tribes like the Bhils in Bombay, the Santals in Bihar, or the Gonds in Central India—is likely to create local problems and threaten the peace of a district. Over large tracts of India the conditions of the countryside are, even in this twentieth century, such that the Robin Hood tradition still survives. Men take to the road or the forest and live the adventurous lives of outlaws, plundering the money-lenders and shopkeepers—not without the aid of torture, and often befriended by the villagers.

In every province there are communities prone to outbreaks of violent crime, dacoity, robbery and so on, such as the Dharalas of Kaira, the Mianas of Kathiawar, the Berads of the southern Maratha country, the Bhantus and Kanjars of the United Provinces and the Punjab, the Sandars of Bengal or the Kallars of Madras.

All these factors tend to create conditions of instability in

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the country. Such tendencies are intensified by the fact that while large sections of the people are brave and descended from generations of warriors, others are, as a matter of caste and heredity, peaceful and unwarlike. This applies in particular to the shopkeeping and moneylending castes, who are thus ordinarily incapable of meeting violence at the hands of the fighting races or the attacks of the lawless elements, unless by some form of passive resistance in which they often display remarkable tenacity. There are individual exceptions to every rule, but for a bania, as the trading classes are commonly called, to attack is almost unknown, and to offer a stout resistance to attack extremely rare.

A typical instance of the interaction of these various characteristics, such as frequently appears in the investigation of robberies, occurred when a Baluchi peasant met a shopkeeper on a lonely road near Ratodero in the Larkana District. The Baluchi knew, and the bania had probably not forgotten, that it was commonly said that when the Talpur Baluchi Mirs were the rulers of that part of the country—before they were defeated by Sir Charles Napier in 1842—no bania was allowed to ride on a horse.

The Baluchis were a proud, warlike race of hillmen with customs, habits and manners very similar to those of the Scottish Highlanders of the seventeenth century. Their chiefs were great horsemen and horse-breeders, and it did not seem fit in their eyes that a bania should ride on anything more noble and spirited than the diminutive donkey of those parts.

The levelling influence of British law has induced the banias to desert the humble mount which the Talpurs permitted in favour of, not the Baluchi warrior's steed, but a quiet and emaciated nag. Our bania was so mounted and he carried before him a sack of onions, which he was bringing from the local market town. The Baluchi's bucolic sense of humour was for some reason tickled by the sight, and he called out:

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‘Bakhal,’ (which is a somewhat contemptuous term applied by Baluchis to banias), ‘dismount.’

So saying, he stepped up to him and gave the bania a sudden push, at which the latter lost his balance and fell off. Both men were equally unarmed, but the Baluchi quietly mounted the animal and rode away. The bania then walked ten miles to the nearest police station and invoked the assistance of the law, charging the other with having forcibly robbed him of a horse, a bag of onions and some money.

Under the conditions of public instability, resulting from all these various factors, racial, communal, criminal and traditional, the Police in India must be for ever ready to suppress ebullitions of violence.

These circumstances render it compellingly necessary for authority to be armed with wide powers for which no need exists in other more homogeneous countries. In the Indian districts situations constantly arise, and are always liable to arise, in which the strength of character of police and magistracy is put to the test. Popular disturbances can often be prevented from coming to a head by tact and foresight on the part of officers who understand the various diverse peoples, and know when to use persuasion, how to appeal to the sense of honour innate in well-bred Indians, and when to hint at the presence of that power which, in the circumstances of India, must always be available, even if undisplayed and in reserve. No government, indigenous or foreign, autocratic or constitutional, can hope to administer such a country, unless its local officials have extensive legal powers and ultimately the backing of unlimited force.

Under Moghul rule and under Hindu rule, such as that of the Marathas and their Peshwas, force was sometimes used with a ferocity which is foreign to our ideals. Under British rule, apart from the ideals of the ruling race, the use of law has to a great extent mitigated the use of force. Under the British system the great majority of the officials have always been Indians, and it is a common experience for British officers to find it necessary to check a tendency on the part

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of their Indian subordinates to be *zabardast*, or to use more force and more threat of force than is strictly required by the circumstances of the particular case.

It has, however, been unavoidable that, in the process of the gradual developments in the administration since we inherited it from our predecessors in the different parts of India, officials such as the District Magistrate have retained legal powers of wider scope than those of any official in England. For the same reasons the District Superintendent of Police has at his disposal armed and well-trained bodies of police to defend the villages from armed dacoits or frontier raiders, to keep the more lawless, Baluchis, Dharalas, Berads and others, in check, to round up outlaws, and to restrain communal passions.

We have seen how in each district of, perhaps, 4,000 square miles—the largest is about 14,000 and the smallest about 2,000, but 4,000 is a common size—there are from ten to fifteen tehsils or talukas, so that there are something like 3,000 talukas in the whole of British India. At the headquarters of each of them the local magistrate is also in charge of the Government Treasury, and of the lock-up or sub-jail in which persons under trial in his own and other local Courts are detained. The Treasury and sub-jail are always in the same building, and a detachment of the armed Police keeps guard over them and mounts an armed sentry day and night. The taluka headquarters is commonly situated in a village of some three or four thousand inhabitants, which only differs from the innumerable villages of India in having this small circle of Indian officials and, as a result of the Courts being there, a few members of the local Bar. The majority of the villages are, however, considerably smaller.

We have thus viewed in the merest outline the average Indian district, with its four or five British officials at headquarters, and the headquarters town is often little more than a village, and its talukas and their staffs of Indian subordinate officials. There have been a few Indians in the superior Services for many years, and, since the 'Indianiza-



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tion' of those Services has been speeded up, the proportion has gradually increased, so that there are now a certain number of districts with no British officials or only one or two. At present somewhat more than half the District Magistrates are British and about four out of five District Superintendents, but until quite recently nine out of ten were British in both cases.

The joint responsibility of the District Magistrate and the District Superintendent of Police, and their separate functions designed to serve the common purpose of keeping the peace, have been briefly mentioned in the first chapter.

In broad matters of district policy the District Superintendent is subordinate to the District Magistrate. The latter has no authority in anything touching the internal economy of the Police Force. The two officers are brought into close contact either through personal discussion or by correspondence concerning a variety of subjects every day. Almost every happening of importance in the district concerns them both, though sometimes from different angles.

For instance, let us suppose that a new canal is to be cut in Northern India, or a new irrigation dam, with its attendant canals, is to be constructed in the South. The magistrate is concerned with problems connected with the transfer and acquisition of the land required for the headworks, or the dam, and the canal. His mind envisages the future colonization of the land to be reclaimed from the desert and, even where the actual colonization will be dealt with by a special colonization officer, innumerable decisions will fall to his lot. The Police officer on the other hand is concerned with the hordes of strangers who will come into the district for the digging and all the incidental labour involved. There will be an influx of members of some criminal tribe who do a certain amount of labour between whiles, and most probably swarms of Pathans from the frontier districts or the trans-border—these people go to seek work down south to Bombay and beyond—and they are often on the lookout for chances of committing crime, the more violent the better, as much as for

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problems it may be desirable to establish a special temporary police station, or to arrange for smaller posts for surveillance purposes. Similarly, an outbreak of disease, plague, cholera or the like, brings both the magistrate and the Police officer into the field, the former to see that all available resources are being employed, and that the doctors are being given a fair field, the latter to see that police arrangements are made to prevent the criminal elements from making a harvest of their neighbours' troubles.

It is recognized as the first duty of both officers to keep in touch with the people and to know what is going on, whether any trouble is brewing between two rival factions, whether any subordinate official is behaving in any manner likely to create a public scandal, and to take such remedial measures as may appear suitable in each case. There are therefore many ways in which friction may arise between them. The District Superintendent may notice that a certain magistrate is discharging an unusual number of apparently good police cases, and may have reason to suspect his honesty. He may bring the matter to the notice of the District Magistrate, who may think that the District Superintendent has been lending too willing an ear to irresponsible slander.

The relations of some important landowner—and in the circumstances of rural society many men of good standing often have shady relations—may come under the suspicion of a sub-inspector in connexion with cattle theft. If the landowner has known the District Magistrate well for years, and under family pressure calls on him and mentions incidentally in the course of conversation that Sub-Inspector Mahomedbux is getting a bad name for the way he is letting off the real thieves and accusing innocent persons, he will only be acting in accordance with his lights. If the District Magis-



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trate tells the story to the District Superintendent, he may in turn think that the District Magistrate is too ready to be unfairly prejudiced against the Police without realizing their difficulties.

Thus they may easily fail if there is anything of pettiness in their natures. Then again, if their functions as to the maintenance of the peace are separate, the border-line cannot always be clearly defined. Where two human beings have to take action in concert, a clash of opinions as to ways and means is always possible.

The relationship between these two officers is, in fact, typical of English arrangements with their lack of logical finish. An observer ignorant of the English character might suppose that the two could not possibly work amicably together, and that disagreement between them must become chronic. In all but a few negligible cases they do work amicably together, and hundreds of them have done so consistently in the smooth times and the rough times of our story in India. Why? They are men in whom the ideal of playing the game has been ingrained since their school days. Neither tries, as a rule, to encroach on the other's sphere or to undermine his authority. They have the same ideals, the same traditions—they play cricket, hockey, polo or other games together, and they seek to achieve their ends in the same way. If they disagree they disagree honestly, and in matters of great moment their disagreement can be resolved by higher authority; in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred they see eye to eye, and the hundredth case is not allowed to affect their personal relations. If this is to be so, they must be men with balance, moderation, judgement, in a word the *σωφροσύνη* of those great pioneers of civilization based on law.

How such a system will work in Indian hands is a matter for speculation, as up to the present it is virtually untried; and Indians with equal balance, moderation and judgement have a different philosophy, different reactions and different traditions from our own. When the majority of district

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magistrates and district superintendents are Indians, they may well find it necessary to evolve new standards of relationship.

The work which the head of a district Police Force superintends is that concerned with the prevention and detection of crime in the broadest sense of the meaning of those terms. They cover all the functions of the Police under the headings 'Law and Order' and 'Watch and Ward'.

The functions of the Police under 'Law and Order' are very comprehensively governed in India by the Code of Criminal Procedure which lays down how an investigation should be commenced, carried on, and concluded, and by whom; how offenders should be brought before the Courts, and how the trial should be conducted. It also lays down under what circumstances and conditions persons considered likely to commit offences should be brought before the Courts in order that security may be taken from them to be of good behaviour, or even that they should be detained in custody if they cannot satisfy the Court in that respect.

In this way the Police are empowered by law in respect of every step they take in the long process of detecting a crime, and also to make arrests in order to prevent one.

A long list of offences and an exact definition of each are contained in the Indian Penal Code. Offences are broadly divided as those against (*a*) the State, (*b*) the person, (*c*) property, (*d*) special and local laws.

Offences against the State are ordinarily connected with the question of the maintenance of order. Those in the three remaining classes may be so connected if violence by or against the public is involved.

Measures designed to prevent offences against the State come within the province of the Army under the head of 'internal security'. If a situation arises in which martial law is necessitated, action by the Police is subordinated to the control and direction of the military authorities, but, short of that, action for the maintenance of order is taken by the Police. The District Superintendent is responsible for all

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arrangements suitable to this end in either case, whether under military control or under the normal civil administration. In certain circumstances the Army may be called in to assist the civil power, as on the occasion of serious rioting, without control and direction passing from the civil to the military authorities. In such circumstances force can only be employed by the troops under the orders of a magistrate.

Of first importance among measures designed to maintain order and to prevent offences against the State is the establishment of a suitable system of intelligence.

In an ordinary Indian district in quiet times, political intelligence matters will hardly obtrude themselves on the attention of the district officers, but since the War few districts can have been so fortunate.

Apart from matters of political importance, the District Superintendent must see to it that there is an adequate system for the distribution of intelligence concerning criminals, whether those likely to disturb the public tranquillity or those likely to pick men's pockets.

The remaining measures concerned with the prevention of crime are those taken by providing beats and patrols within a large town, patrols to protect roads and patrols from village to village. These last are an important means of collecting intelligence.

Thus intelligence is collected by constables in the villages. This is sifted by the Sub-Inspector, supplemented from his own resources and knowledge, and, when he thinks desirable, communicated to the office of the District Superintendent. There it is re-examined and some is circulated in the district, some is communicated to the Provincial C.I.D., whence again it is circulated according to the circumstances of the case to other districts in the province and to other provinces.

By this means certain criminals become known almost throughout India if their radius of action is sufficiently wide. An interesting individual of this sort was Kala Khan, a Pathan, who had a peculiar *modus operandi*, which brought him to the notice of the Police at every port from Karachi to

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Rangoon, and an extraordinary capacity for escaping from custody after arrest, which made him a frequent object of the attentions of the Railway Police and the Police of interior districts which lay on the routes by which he was taken in custody to stand his trial at one port after another.

Kala Khan was not a big man, as the Pathan usually is, but was small enough to wriggle through a ship's porthole. He used to take advantage of this facility to board vessels in harbour in this unconventional manner and at unconventional hours. He always made a point of calling on the ship's officers while they slept, and he always 'left his card' in a peculiarly indecent and offensive manner. He did not take small things by way of a memento, but, while he did not disdain a gold watch, the real object of his desires was always a revolver. He often showed great skill in securing these things without waking the sleeper, even if he had to remove a watch or a bunch of keys from under his pillow. Once he was caught red-handed by some unfortunate accident, and after that, whenever any port chronicled a recurrence of his unforgettable methods, all his known haunts—it is 3,500 miles from Karachi to Rangoon—were combed for him. On the first two or three occasions on which he was arrested, the great machine dealt with him as a matter of routine, but he soon earned the distinction of causing routine to be abandoned for special measures. If there was a fatally rigid *modus operandi* about his thefts, there was nothing of the sort about his escapes. He employed every conceivable artifice by turn to escape from his armed Police escorts. Ordinary prisoners make little effort to elude their escorts, which are the more easily caught napping by an artist of Kala Khan's determination. In a long railway journey from Bombay to Calcutta his escort would be changed three times. If the first were alert, he waited for the second, and, slipping his small wrists out of the handcuffs just as a train was leaving a wayside station in the middle of the night, disappeared. On another occasion he contrived to dose himself so heavily with medicine that his escort were compelled to take him

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out at several stations *en route*. When they had become accustomed to this and their vigilance was relaxed—he was apparently reduced to a state bordering on exhaustion—he climbed over the back wall of the station latrine and made off across country in the half-light of early dawn at a speed which took him out of sight before the escort realized that he had got away. After he had effected several escapes in different provinces and become known to the Police all over the country, it was obvious that he could not be left to the care of armed Police Head Constables under the routine arrangements—he had left a trail of Head Constables with blasted careers behind him—and concerted action was taken by a number of district superintendents and deputy commissioners of police in half a dozen provinces to concentrate on the cases against him in one place and to have the proceedings against him dropped elsewhere. In the result, he was safely lodged in jail for a long period.

Thus the District Police *Gazettes* and the Provincial Police *Gazettes* spread a wide net, and a small-meshed one, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and from Baluchistan to Burma.

The organization of the District Police Force is not very elaborate. Under the District Superintendent there is a deputy superintendent in a small district, with the addition of an assistant superintendent in a larger one. In the largest there may be two or even three deputies. Some of these officers hold charge of subdivisions, others are in charge at headquarters, where they are responsible for general supervision over the office, especially while the District Superintendent is away on tour, as well as over the Police in the headquarters town, the armed Police and the Stores and Account Offices. There has been a tendency to favour giving them charge of a subdivision rather than headquarters on the ground that in view of their previous training they are more experienced in work connected with the investigation of crime than with the routine work at headquarters."

Among the changes recommended for general adoption by

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the Police Commission of 1902-3 was the introduction of the Circle Inspector in those provinces where he did not exist. This was generally approved, except in the Punjab where it was tried and abandoned, on the ground that the Circle Inspector acted as a barrier between the district or sub-divisional officer and the police station. The Punjab view was not favoured elsewhere. The Circle Inspector is expected to supervise the work of about five police stations, and to devote his constant personal attention to the investigation of serious crime, such as murder, dacoity, robbery and house-breaking. As he is an experienced officer and is free from the routine work of a police station, he is in a position to ensure a sustained effort in the more important and difficult cases. The Sub-Inspector is often handicapped in this respect, in that he has a number of less important cases always on his hands, and with an area of over 100 square miles to cover he has to spend a great deal of time in Court or dealing with a large volume of work of a miscellaneous nature. In the more sparsely populated parts of the country the area of a police station is often 200 square miles, and in the deserts it may exceed 500 square miles.

The police-station officer is the corner-stone of the whole system. The police station with one or two satellite outposts is the indivisible unit, and the Sub-Inspector in charge is the primary investigating agency. His work brings him into intimate contact with the people. In fact to millions of Indians he is the 'Sirkar' or Government incarnate.

In the whole of British India there are 4,000 rural police stations. There are approximately 200 police stations in the larger towns like Allahabad, Lahore, Karachi, Sholapur or Trichinopoli. These are usually in charge of an inspector, who in some cases is still known by the old Moghul appellation of kotwal. There are also the sixteen police stations of Bombay City, the twenty-six of Calcutta and the twenty-four of Madras.

In the preponderating rural police stations the usual staff under the Sub-Inspector consists of three or four head con-



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stables and from ten to fifteen constables, who are employed to assist in the investigation of crime, and in the service of warrants and summonses. There are also one or two men employed on the clerical duties of the station, which include the writing up of the prescribed registers. If there is a small town of 10,000 or so—and such towns are not numerous—a head constable and three or four constables may be employed on beat duty. If there is an outpost or two, it will probably be located at a small town of this kind, and the Head Constable and probably three constables will be expected to do beat duty in the town or to serve process or assist the Sub-Inspector when he comes into their area to investigate. An average police station, then, has a staff of about twenty policemen, and an area of about 150 square miles. It deals with about 150 crimes in the year, besides minor offences such as cruelty to animals, infringements of local laws, and nowadays, in all save the most backward tracts, motoring offences.

The variety of the activities of the staff of a police station is reflected in the large number of registers maintained. In the Punjab they number about twenty, in Bihar and Orissa forty, in Bombay thirty-five, in the Central Provinces twenty-five, and so on. Two of outstanding importance are the Daily Diary and the register which, under different names in different provinces, deals specifically with the crimes committed and the criminals living in the villages, and, if properly kept up, forms a connected criminal history of each village under the police-station jurisdiction. The importance of the Daily Diary arises from the fact that it is meant to be a full and true account of important events, and a copy is sent to the District Superintendent at the end of every twenty-four hours. It thus serves to fix the responsibility of the Sub-Inspector and his subordinates for any action taken or for failure to take action.

The internal organization of a police station, even a small rural police station in India, is an affair of only less complexity than is the case with its more highly developed

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counterpart in a city. These details are of a specialist nature, and would make tedious reading.

The character of that work varies greatly with the geographical conditions of its locality, and here we reach a region in which generalizations must give way to specific descriptions. Such descriptions would fill many volumes and, apart from any other consideration, are beyond the scope of our present purpose. Some aspects of the varied character of the work of investigating crime will be examined in succeeding chapters, but one aspect of the police-station officer's work which is common to the whole of India is the suddenness with which serious emergencies may arise, and the slender resources available to him with which to meet them.

Police officers will tell you that even in a city like Calcutta or Bombay every police station has its peculiarities and that the work and the whole atmosphere is different in every one of them. How much greater is the difference between a police station on the frontier and one in Bow Bazaar; or between one in the country of the aboriginal Kolis of the Sahyadhri mountains and one in the sacred and learned city of Benares; between one in the tea-garden country of Assam and one among the sandy deserts which fringe the lands of the Baluchi horsemen.

A list of such contrasts could be extended to almost any length, but they all have this in common, that difficult and dangerous situations are possible at any moment, and the rural police stations are mostly many miles from effective help in the shape of armed reserves, or of counsel and guidance from superior officers. They are more often than not devoid of telegraphic and telephonic communication, although these facilities are being gradually extended.

It would convey a wrong impression if anything which has been said suggests that the whole of India is in a constant state of turmoil. The unfortunate trend of recent political developments has created this impression, but, even since 1914, in hundreds of villages the people have lived peaceful and comparatively uneventful lives. Prior to the first non-



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co-operation campaign of 1919 this peacefulness was far more general and far more uninterruptedly sustained.

Nevertheless, the conditions are such that in a police station with anything between 60 and 100 villages a sub-inspector might expect at least one of them to produce a serious emergency every month—rather more in the warlike, violent North and West, distinctly less in the quieter South and East. The Frontier Province is, of course, a land where men go armed, where the blood feud flourishes and fanatical *ghazis* have slain the *kafir* (which includes Hindus and British officers) year by year for a century or more. The police stations of this province differ from those of all the rest of India in being miniature forts, strongly built to stand a siege if necessary, with loopholes and flanking towers—no idle precaution, as the grim police records of those places testify.

In the other provinces of India, the police-station building has long been emblematic of the *pax Britannica*. It may be built of stone, brick or mud, but it is a plain unfortified building designed for a land free from war and invasion.

The Sub-Inspector's quarters are close beside his office, but the conditions of his work, which require him to combine mobility with close and very detailed attention to the affairs of villages where a crime has been committed, result in his frequently spending the night in the traveller's rest-house, *chowri* or *musafirkhana*, which most villages can boast. Here he may be awakened at dead of night by the sound of distant firing, a signal that a neighbouring village is being looted by an armed gang of dacoits. Perhaps an informer may creep to his bedside to whisper that some such gang of dangerous criminals all carrying firearms has been located in a certain village or forest. As he sits at his office table, a man may dash in streaming with blood to tell him that a band of his enemies a mile away are even now murdering his relations, or a village headman may gallop up on a sweating pony with the news that a villager has run amuck with a rifle, pistol, axe or sword, has killed half a dozen people, and has

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barricaded himself into his house, prepared to sell his life dearly and to die fighting.

In such crises, and these are no fanciful cases but have actually occurred time after time with slight variations, the Police officer has to act on the instant and show his mettle. There may be only one or two constables with him; but he must go out to do what he can. In the Indian Police no situation is counted impossible. The first and last rule of conduct for all ranks is to go straight for any trouble and deal with it before it becomes more serious. There can be no excuse for failing to learn of a small cloud low on the horizon, which for a sub-inspector as for a viceroy may quickly obscure the sky; and the officer who evades an issue must expect to face the bitterness of a ruined career. From all ranks a standard of bravery is expected which would appear incredible if it were not habitually attained. Some record of these things may be read in the narrative of the awards of the King's Police Medal, but for every one recorded a thousand instances of coolness and courage must pass unnoticed. In the streets of that city whose cotton mills never fail to find the crowds which become mobs, and the mobs which turn to frenzied slaying, a constable regulating traffic was suddenly attacked without warning by a mob of several hundreds one evening in 1930. He was rescued and taken to the hospital where the doctors despaired of his life. A few evenings later, about midnight, two of the Deputy Commissioners, having heard that a mob was burning the wooden chowkis which serve as rallying points for the Police, got into a car and went to find out what was happening. When they reached the scene of the attack on the traffic constable, they were somewhat surprised to find a constable on duty at the neighbouring chowki, alone and very much at his ease. They asked him whether he had received any news of the chowkis in the neighbourhood being burnt down. 'Yes,' he said with complete unconcern, as he opened the wooden door to enable one of his officers to go to the telephone, 'there is some rumour about the chowki in the next section being alight,

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and some sort of a mob moving about.' The officers felt that *sang-froid* like this was typical of the Maratha sepoy; that it should lead to the Orderly Room rather than to the Honours List; but that without this spirit it would be hard to keep the Police on duty in the streets of Bombay, especially in times of unrest.

A typical story from the Honours List is that of a sub-inspector in the Ludhiana District of the Punjab, who heard that a notorious dacoit named Ramsingh had suddenly appeared in a village a few miles away and was engaged in shooting all his enemies. The officer at once set out for the place. On arrival he found that Ramsingh occupied a strong position on the roof of his house, and was armed with a double-barrelled gun and a plentiful supply of ammunition. Climbing on to another roof, he opened fire on the dacoit, and after a brisk exchange of shots received a nasty wound in the head. He decided to try to get to closer quarters before his strength failed. With this object he made his way towards Ramsingh's roof, when the dacoit, overawed by the other's tenacity, took refuge inside the house, leaving a trail of blood to show that he also had been hit. Then the policeman climbed on to Ramsingh's roof, and called upon him to surrender. The only reply was a succession of shots through the mud covering of the flimsy roof. There were no other firearms in the village, and the officer was too exhausted, in his wounded condition, to rush the house; so he kept vigil until help arrived from the police station and Ramsingh was overpowered and captured.

We are glad of his stubborn courage when a wild boar turns and charges the pursuing spears; or of the steadiness of a pony in pursuit which answers unflinching to hand and heel. We are thrilled by the disciplined strength of a regiment advancing against uncounted odds; and we know, as history has proved in an unending series of heroic deeds, that thinking man is not less noble than the unthinking beast. When an individual, without compulsion and without being carried along on the surging courage of others, takes part in a

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desperate venture out of a sense of duty, we acknowledge a higher quality in the undying spirit of man. The annals of all great armies are full of the stories of men who volunteered for forlorn hopes; and stories such as that of Zeebrugge live in the hearts of the nations.

On their smaller stage and almost unnoticed the officers of the Police in India give evidence of this same quality, as the above story proves. Even that is surpassed in devotion to duty by the deeds of Sub-Inspector Ferozdin of the North-West Frontier Police, when he defended his police station and the village of Lachi Bazar. It was during the Afghan War of 1919, and the situation on the frontier was more delicate and dangerous than it had ever been. The Sub-Inspector was off duty, sick of the dreadful disease of cholera which saps a man's whole strength. He received the news that his charge was about to be attacked by a band of trans-border raiders, and he was not the man to shelter behind the plea of sickness, when every hand that could be raised was needed. So he went to his police station and made his dispositions for its defence.

There were only nine policemen available. He left six behind to hold the fort, and took the other three to help him to organize the defence of the bazaar. A few sturdy villagers with odds and ends of firearms joined him, and leading this scanty force he turned to meet the raiders, who by this time had started to loot the village, and forced them to retreat. A long running fight ensued, during which five of Ferozdin's little army were killed or wounded, but not without inflicting losses on the raiders and making them abandon most of the loot. The fight went on until darkness forced him to break off the pursuit, and then this heroic officer, having been true to his duty, in spite of weakness and fearful suffering, collapsed and fainted from pain and exhaustion.

Of the more ordinary courage which wells up in a sudden fight there is an endless store in the ranks of the Indian Police, and the records are full of the tales. Among them is that of a sub-inspector in the United Provinces, who was

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investigating a case of robbery by an armed gang, when an informer told him that four of the gang were hiding in a neighbouring village. He added that two of them had shot-guns, and were very good shots. Away went the Sub-Inspector with three constables. He was in time to surround the house in which the dacoits lay concealed before they could escape. They rushed on to the roof of their house, and thence opened rapid fire on the four policemen. There were no firearms in the village, except those which the Police had brought, and a frontal attack was out of the question. The Sub-Inspector resorted to stratagem. He drew off a little way with two of his men and lay in hiding. The other constable and the villagers managed to decoy the dacoits from the roof. These desperadoes, seeing only one policeman, no doubt thought that they had hit the others or scared them, or that they had withdrawn to go in search of help. They made a dash for safety, but the wily Sub-Inspector had correctly anticipated the direction they would take. They had not gone far before he jumped from his ambush and called on them to surrender. The two men with guns at once opened fire at him and wounded him badly in the side. He returned the fire, hitting two of them. They did not stand, but made off, hotly pursued by the Police; and the Sub-Inspector, despite his grievous hurt, played a leading part in their capture.

Such affairs as these are not rare or exceptional incidents in the life of the Indian Police. They are part of the normal existence of all ranks in the districts of every province. If the life of thousands of villages is peaceful and uneventful in the main, if the Rule of Law generally sustains the countryside, there are always a few individuals who, with a lust for adventure in their blood, take to the jungle or join gangs of organized robbers, and strut across some rural stage for awhile.

Even the everyday work of the police station is often far from being humdrum. The ordinary police-station officer is no Sherlock Holmes, and indeed scientific methods are often

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not only not needed, but impossible. What he does need is a good fund of mother wit, tireless energy, much local knowledge and sound judgement of human nature. He has to work with an inadequate staff, among a public which is often apathetic and sometimes hostile to the success of an investigation. The crime which the Police are investigating may be one which commands the sympathy of the local people. Perhaps an oppressive moneylender—and they are the bane of rural India—has been murdered, or an immoral landlord who covets poorer men's wives. Gang-robbery or dacoity is mostly directed against grasping banias, moneylenders or shopkeepers, and the common destruction of their account books on such occasions tells a tale. The criminals perhaps have influential friends or relations, or they may be such desperate characters that the fear of their vengeance seals men's mouths. The complainant in a case will often try to mislead the Police, either from a desire to implicate and ruin an enemy whom he suspects, or because his own motives in the tangled skein of things are mixed. So the Sub-Inspector usually finds the dice loaded against him at the outset.

He in his turn sometimes descends to methods which the standards of good government condemn. His work is heavy; and it is not always easy to reconcile the requirements of a strict code of law with human nature. He may feel that he has not the time for the innumerable questionings, journeys, searches and the like which every investigation should entail. So sometimes he tries to take a short cut to achieve his aim. It must be emphasized that actual torture is very rare nowadays. It was more common before the deep-seated traditions of former days had yielded to higher standards inculcated by the superior officers, especially since the formation of the organized Constabulary in 1861, and the creation of the cadre of sub-inspectors at the beginning of the present century. Strict orders have enjoined on district superintendents the need for personal inquiry into any allegation of torture against their subordinates; and the precept



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and example of British officers, combined with the severe punishment of offending policemen, have made it impossible for this practice to flourish openly. While general allegations of this sort are not uncommonly made against the subordinate Police in the Press and elsewhere, particular allegations are now rare. General confidence in the attitude of the magistracy and superior officers of the Police to this question is displayed by all classes.

The outstanding duty of the police-station officer is to prevent and detect crime. He must be in touch with all that happens in his jurisdiction, and keep the higher authorities fully and constantly informed. He must maintain good relations with the local magistrates and other officials, and with the leading landowners, merchants, village headmen and people of standing generally. He must know the criminals, and the classes likely to take to crime. He must deal with them as a man, and keep his dignity and position. He must know how to obtain the best possible standard of work from his subordinates; and sense when to humour them, when to drive them, when to pardon and when to report them to the District Superintendent for punishment—he has no disciplinary powers himself and must report when at his discretion he considers it necessary to do so. The police station is often many miles of bad road away from the District Headquarters. The duties are exacting and the position calls for many high qualities. The majority of the officers perform the duties and fill the position with success.

A very good description of an Indian police station has been given by an American lady, Miss Emerson, in a recent book, which has been commended by Rabindranath Tagore as giving a true picture of the 'pathetic life' of an Indian village. While, *en passant*, it is difficult to resist the feeling that the famous Indian poet is not always quite impartial—in that he is inclined to emphasize the 'pathetic' side of Indian life in order to blame the Government—it must be conceded that the picture of petty corruption painted by Miss Emerson is a true one. If it is true it is nothing new, and

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it can fairly be claimed that much has been done to make the modern constabulary police forces in India better than their predecessors in regard to honesty and morale. Much remains to be done. Again, if the picture is true, it is not the whole truth. There are other aspects of the life and work of the Indian Police which deserve to be emphasized.

For instance, many of them have saved the lives of people in flood and fire and other calamities at the risk of their own. Many of them have given their lives in the performance of their duties to protect the lives and property of the public from evildoers. In the year 1927, which was one of the quietest in recent times and free from rioting or political disturbances, no less than thirty-four policemen laid down their lives and 268 suffered wounds or injury in the performance of their duty. These casualties are incurred in the normal course of things in dealing with dacoits, burglars and other criminals.

An instance of this kind occurred when a constable challenged some men who had just committed a burglary in the Agra District of the United Provinces. On his challenge they felled him to the ground, fracturing his skull with heavy lathis. He got up and followed them; and did not leave them until he had them arrested. He then fell dead from his injuries; and later his Inspector-General wrote his epitaph: 'His name was Ramgopal, and he is counted among those who never die.'



## CHAPTER VI

### THE AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

**T**HE LAWS of Manu required the King to punish evil-doers and to restrain violence; and to maintain patrols and posts and spies to enable him to carry out these duties. This fact proves that in those days the village communities had no organization which sufficed to maintain the peace unaided. It disproves any suggestion that the villages were small autonomous republics, as it were, and shows that the need for a central authority for these purposes was recognized before the Mahomedan era. Mahomedan rule was essentially imperial, and employed a military force under the revenue officers to keep order, while leaving the villagers to manage their own affairs to a very great extent.

The British Government, in the slow and gradual process of converting a military autocracy into a constitutional system under the rule of law, was constrained, as we have seen, to forge a weapon to perform these functions of the King. Accepting as they always did the forms of government as they found them, while only gradually adapting them to principles whose logical conclusion was constitutional democracy, they did not attempt to make the Police Force which they created supersede or take the place of the existing village Police. On the contrary, all their endeavours were directed towards strengthening the village organization. Lord Hastings in 1815 declared that they were a necessary part of 'all our measures for the benefit of the country in the prevention, detection and punishment of crime'. Sir Thomas Munro in 1824 expressed himself as strongly opposed to any idea of absorbing the village watch into the regular police system.

The village Police were regarded as an essential part of the

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machinery for dealing with crime and maintaining order, but by themselves they did not and could not suffice for either purpose. In order fully to understand the part played by the village Police it is necessary to examine the conditions of village life. These conditions vary considerably in different provinces, and to study them in any detail is beyond the scope of this work, which is only concerned with the village Police in so far as they serve as auxiliaries to the regular force.

The villages of India belong to two main types; in one the landlord or zemindar class has a predominating position, while in the other the peasant or cultivator holds his own land and pays taxes direct to the State instead of to a landlord. The former is general in the North, where the zemindar was originally the tax-farmer of the Mahomedan administration, the latter in the South, especially in Madras and Bombay. The influences of the Mahomedan system were slight or only transitory in the South, and some parts never came under their dominion. The villages of the South represent a survival of the ancient Hindu social organization. Those of the North, broadly speaking, retain traces of those same Hindu communities which have passed through the fires of Scythian, Hunnish and other invasions from Central Asia, absorbed their conquerors, whose social organization was based on the tribe, not on a system of village communities; later endured through centuries of Mahomedan administration, whose basis was fiscal; and finally came under the British, who built up their administrative system out of the materials left by their predecessors. In the zemindari villages of the North the headman in most cases owes his existence as such to the Government which appointed him to act in revenue and police matters, and the village watch are, or tend to be, his personal servants. In the South the headman is a part of the ancient village community; and the village Police or watch are the servants of the community. In the extreme case of Sind there are no village Police. The Mahomedan peasantry are still in a tribal state of organization, and the Mahomedan zemindar is, virtually,

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a tribal chief with traditional responsibilities towards the men of his tribe and the villages on his land.

Between the extremes in Sind and Madras there are many variations and each of the Provincial Governments of British India has passed separate and often widely differing legislation on the subject of village Police. The general tendency under the British has been to place them under the control of the District Magistrate with a view to preventing their being absorbed or too closely dominated by the regular Police.

The history of the village Police, as Matthai has pointed out, is well illustrated in Bengal, where they were originally an organ of the village community, and later, under the Moghuls, became the servants of the tax-farmers. Later still, they were placed under the darogahs or official police agency created by Lord Cornwallis. Again, as a result of legislation in 1870, an unsuccessful attempt was made to reconstitute them as an organ of the village community. Finally, following the example of Bombay and other provinces, they were placed under the control of the District Magistrates.

While under the control of the magistrates, their functions are to keep watch and ward in the village, and to assist the regular Police by obtaining information and by furthering their objects in the course of an investigation into a crime. This is true of all the different types, and in Sind in the absence of any village agency it is a recognized duty of all zemindars, great and small, to assist the Police.

It has often been the custom in India to 'set a thief to catch a thief', and for similar reasons to employ the criminal classes to protect property. The idea was that if a member of a marauding tribe were paid to act as watchman he would be able to undertake that no one of his tribe would rob his employers. On these grounds most English residents in Poona until recently—and some still do so—employed a decrepit old man of the Ramoshi tribe who was supposed to keep watch at night. Formerly he was no less efficient because he slept most of the night. His presence was a

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guarantee that the men of the Ramoshi tribe would not touch the bungalow where he was retained.

Moreover, if any other criminal dared to invade their prerogative of breaking into houses in that neighbourhood, they would almost certainly be able to ensure that the property would be returned. It is partly because they have gradually lost the power to secure these preventive and detective results—on account of the operation of legal processes during the last few decades—that their value as a measure of insurance has diminished and they are not so generally employed.

For similar reasons classes like the Bhils in Khandesh were frequently employed as village watchmen. The village watchmen are usually men of a low caste, as some of their work would be considered degrading by the higher castes. This, of course, does not apply to the headman, who supervises the police in addition to his other functions in connexion with the collection of revenue. He may sometimes act as an arbitrator in village disputes and generally guide the conduct of village affairs; but the position is somewhat vague and the village community, constituted often on a narrow basis of hereditary privilege, plays a minor and not very clearly defined part in the administrative system.

When a case of murder, robbery, house-breaking or any other crime of a similar or serious nature occurs in the village, the headman is bound by law to inform the regular police. When the Sub-Inspector comes to investigate, the headman is supposed to render all the assistance in his power, and the village watchmen are utilized within the boundaries of their own village to obtain information and to call people before the investigating officer when he wishes to question them. The village Police have no legal position outside their own village, and in most provinces wear no uniform. Within the village and within the area of the land belonging to it they are invaluable to the investigating police officer. In the zemindari villages, and particularly in a country like Sind,

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where there are no village Police, the zemindars are expected to render similar assistance both in person and through the men of their tribe, or their servants. They will often spend hours or even days accompanying a sub-inspector, or, in the case of a serious crime like dacoity or murder, a district superintendent, and, through their local knowledge and influence, can give great assistance in the investigation and in the apprehension of offenders who may desire to avoid the Police. Their influence is not, of course, invariably exerted on the side of the law. It has already been mentioned that the state of rural society is such that the leading men of the countryside often have shady relatives. Sometimes they may also have an axe of their own to grind.

Contact between the regular Police and the village Police is not confined to co-ordination in the investigation of crime. The jurisdiction of a police station is divided into a number of beats. In each beat there are from fifteen to two dozen villages; and a beat is assigned to a constable at the police station or outpost. When not otherwise engaged, or when there is a summons or warrant to be served, the constable of the beat visits these villages, and makes inquiries regarding current affairs and the behaviour of convicted and suspected criminals. For this purpose he meets the village headman and the village Police. He reports the results to the officer in charge of the police station. Further, by the system of 'Village Crime Note-books', the Sub-Inspector maintains a permanent record of persons with criminal proclivities in each village, and the village headman is responsible for keeping the Sub-Inspector informed of their doings. A conscientious Sub-Inspector must, therefore, whenever he visits a village, discuss these matters with the headman, and he will also advise the headman to assist ex-convicts to obtain an honest livelihood, so that steps may be taken, as far as possible, to prevent their reverting to crime. In some provinces it is or was customary for the village headmen to bring the men with criminal records to the police station or outpost at the time of the inspection by a district, assistant or deputy super-

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intendent—normally once in a year—when the registers are examined and men for whose good behaviour the headman is prepared to answer have the satisfaction of seeing their names removed from the lists of criminals under surveillance by order of the highest police authorities. In recent years the need for economy in police administration has to some extent curtailed the activities of officers of all ranks, with inevitable consequences in the way of less frequent visits to police stations by the higher officers, and to villages by the lower. Consequently the contact between the village Police and the regular district Police is not always as close as it was formerly.

When considering the organization of the Indian Police on a provincial basis we have seen how it acted like the reserves of a bank on which a superstructure of credit could be raised far larger than the foundation of real capital on which the credit rested. Similarly in a province the system of police organization, by allowing reserves to be moved at need from a quiet to a disturbed area, obviates the necessity for maintaining always a force sufficiently numerous to cope with all emergencies in every district. Circumstances frequently arise, however, to make it necessary to increase the strength of the Police of a district for purposes which do not call for the transfer of reserves from outside. Thus a bank or business firm when extending or altering its premises may ask for special police protection. A very rich or timid person may desire a police guard to be posted at his house to protect his person or very valuable property; or a particular sect or class of persons in the district may become obnoxious to their neighbours and require additional police in their vicinity to keep the peace. These and similar occasions for the employment of what are officially called additional police constantly arise in the ordinary course, and the law provides for the employment of such additional police at the discretion of the local authorities, the expense being met by the persons who requisition them in their own interests.

A more important cause for an addition to the strength of



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the Police Force of a district is provided by an increase of crime in some village or larger area, so marked as to amount virtually to a breakdown of the ordinary machinery of criminal administration in the particular locality concerned. In such cases the cost of the additional Police Force is levied on the inhabitants of that area under the provisions of the Police Act by the District Magistrate, who is empowered to exempt such persons or classes of persons as he shall consider for reasons shown to be innocent in the matter.

The imposition of additional police of this kind can only be authorized by the Governor-in-Council. It is an executive, not a judicial measure. The actual order takes the form of a Resolution of the Provincial Government, usually giving the reasons for the imposition, and the period during which it is to remain in force.

Typical reasons for such impositions are persistent faction murders in certain villages—very prone to this peculiar crime—in Kanara in 1928, murders and outrages by the fanatical sect of Hurs in the desert from time to time, Hindu-Muslim riots in Sholapur, anti-Government riots arising out of Gandhi's 'Non-Co-operation' movements in 1919 and in 1930, extraordinary criminality, including cattle theft, crimes of violence, and finally lawlessness due to political unrest in Sobraon in the Punjab.

These instances are taken at random, but all over India circumstances arise every year to necessitate these special executive measures. Herein lies an outstanding difference between conditions in England and conditions in India. Here we face a fundamental issue—is it or is it not necessary to use strong measures to compel obedience to the law, and to repress violence, turbulence or murder by guile? Is the ordinary law as conceived by English minds insufficient at times to meet the conditions of India as we find them, and is it necessary to resort to special measures, which though they fall far short of the severity practised by our predecessors in India, yet must appear utterly foreign to English ideas of civilization and law? The exact scope of these measures is

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simply to post a force of police in a town or village, and to make it difficult if not impossible for the inhabitants to pursue their lawless courses under this close supervision, while making them pay the cost involved. This usually means that the amount paid per head of the population in a year is well below the wages of a constable for a week.

We cannot imagine a breakdown of the criminal administration in England. Such a thing could mean nothing less than revolution. A homicidal maniac like Jack the Ripper, or a burglar of genius like Peace, may baffle the Police for a time, garrotters and hooligans may intimidate peaceful folk and make lonely roads unsafe, but not for long. All such men become by their deeds the enemies of the whole community. Their crimes are, in spite of the sensational Press, repugnant to the communal conscience. The Police in taking action against them are merely the authorized agents of the people of England who stand solidly behind them, every individual prepared as a matter of course to do anything in his power to bring the offenders to justice. This is a symptom of the English love of freedom and a recognition of the right and duty of every citizen to uphold the laws. It is partly due to an innate respect for law and partly the result of centuries of free self-government. Thus a criminal in England becomes an outlaw in the most real sense of the word, as the murderers of Sir Henry Wilson learned, and the foolish youth who held up a bank clerk at Beckenham with a revolver, only to be captured by local tradesmen and passers-by. Such a man has done more than commit an offence against some provision of the criminal law. By his acts he has divorced himself from his community, whose vital and most fundamental interests find in the law not only their safeguard, but also their outward expression. Therefore a breakdown of the criminal administration is not possible in England, because the criminal law is but one of the heritages of the people and is jealously guarded by them.

Contrast with this the conditions in India. As far as we can learn from the records of the past, in India, as elsewhere in



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Asia, the law has never been anything more than another name for the commands of arbitrary rulers, emperors, kings or kotwals, faujdars or thanadars. Even now few Indians recognize the freedom which the law has given them. By the ingrained traditions of centuries they regard the law as something arbitrary and, perhaps, oppressive, not as something to be defended and cherished. In this inherited fear of the law lies the great danger to public tranquillity in India. When the law-breaker is merely the breaker of a rule of conduct imposed by authority, and is not an enemy with whom the community must deal, then authority must be strong or the law will fail. When an Indian knight, an ex-minister of Government, saw that Gandhi and the Congress intended to break the law, he said to a Deputy Commissioner of Police, 'You must be strong', and again with emphasis, 'You must be strong'. He regarded the law as something belonging to the Government, which they and their police forces must uphold. He did not tell the Congress to seek to change the law by constitutional means.

When faced with murder and outrage, a Government must take action 'to excise the evil from the body politic', and one of the common forms which action has assumed in India has been the imposition of additional police at the expense of the people of the area responsible for abnormality. That is a policy which appears to require no defence; and it is only intended here to attempt an exposition of the main facts and circumstances which the policy is intended to meet. We are, in any case, here concerned not with a discussion of the rights or wrongs of any policy, but only with the ultimate realities which govern the conditions under which the police carry out their duties in India.

Psychologically, we see an almost complete reversal of the conditions which obtain in England. Physically, also, the conditions tend to create difficulties in the way of successful police action. Large parts of India consist of trackless jungles, little-trodden wilderness, barren hills or great riverain tracts where communications are scanty and difficult, and people

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are ignorant and primitive. It is easy in such country for the strong or the desperate man to oppress his neighbours. In the local police station, perhaps thirty or forty miles from the scene of a crime, there is only a handful of policemen, and the calls on their time are many and varied. Under these conditions it is often easy to avoid arrest, and a criminal with any force of character can soon attract a band of like-minded companions. Such a gang shortly becomes the scourge of the countryside, and the people either from fear or favour act as their spies and help or harbour them, feed them, and give them information regarding police movements. Thus it comes about that at any given time in scores and hundreds of places throughout this vast land the extent and state of crime are such that the Police are unable to check it without recourse to extraordinary measures. These extraordinary measures are, it need hardly be mentioned, such as are sanctioned by law and appropriate both to the people against whom they are enforced and to the emergency which exists.

Sometimes the emergency is one which calls for the enrolment of 'special police'—that is, a body of police whose numbers may run into hundreds, enlisted for a special purpose which is as a rule the restoration of law and order over a large area. Sometimes whole districts have lapsed into a state bordering on complete anarchy. Outstanding examples of the employment of special police on a large scale have been furnished by the Moplah revolt and by the Babbar Akali conspiracy in the Jullundur and Hoshiapur districts of the Punjab, the well-known *doaba* between the Sutlej and the Ravi rivers.

Such emergencies as these, however, are fortunately rare, but they illustrate in striking fashion how easy is the descent into the slough of anarchy even under an administration much stronger, more efficient and remarkably ubiquitous in comparison with anything the country has ever known before.

Apart from the very serious emergencies demanding the employment of special police, there are frequent occasions

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when the provincial reserves have to be moved to another district to meet an emergency too great for the local reserves of the district to handle unaided. An instance of this kind occurred early in 1915 when widespread Hindu-Muslim disturbances broke out in Jhang and Mozaffargarh, two districts of the south-western Punjab. The Mahomedan peasantry rose *en masse* against the Hindus and looted, burned and savagely maltreated them. The police forces on the spot were totally inadequate to deal with a sudden rising of this nature. There were as usual about ten or fifteen constables at each police station and, at any given moment, in the jurisdiction of each there might be a dozen bands of Mahomedan peasants, from a thousand to eight thousand strong, looting, burning and destroying. Fortunately the police reserves of the province were assembled at the time of the outbreak in Phillaur, the training school of the Punjab. They were sent at once to the disturbed districts, where they had to play the part of exceedingly mobile and hardy troops. Detachments were sent out in all directions to encounter and disperse bands of raiders. Encounters were frequent, and within a few days of their arrival they had brought the situation under control again. This was done without any appreciable help from the public. Naturally the Mahomedans against whom they were operating were passively resistant, when not actively hostile. The storm of destruction had so unnerved the local Hindus that they had not the morale even to defend themselves. One of many similar incidents which occurred during these disturbances will show both the kind of work performed by the Police, and also how they had to carry it out without assistance even from those on whose behalf they were acting.

A head constable and six men had been sent to patrol in the direction of a small town inhabited by many rich Hindus. His arrival was timely, for at a distance of a mile or so from the town he noticed a great concentration of local Mahomedan peasants. He estimated that several thousand men had collected, so he went into the town, hoping that some of

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the Hindus of 'military age' would turn out to assist the Police in defending their homes and bring such guns as there were in the place or staves and axes. He found all the houses barred and locked, and such was the reign of terror that not a man could be induced to come to his help. He and his six sepoy stolidly went out and took up a position between the town and the hostile gathering.

By this time night was falling and from the host over against them came the deep booming of gongs, an occasional report of gun or pistol and a continuous savage yelling calculated to daunt the Police and to throw the people of the doomed town into such an extremity of terror that they would not dare to face their enemies even to save their lives or their women. In the fading light the Police hastily constructed a rough and flimsy zareba of thorn bushes and the rotting trunks of one or two date palms which had been blown down in a recent storm. Behind this poor defence the seven men awaited the attack of thousands which they knew would come with the darkness. As it grew darker they could see red flashes from Jhuggiwala, some miles across the plain, where the houses of rich and prosperous Hindus had been sacked and fired a day or two before and were still burning. At last the attack came on them. So confident was the mob in its overwhelming numbers that those who had firearms did not think to fire them. They meant to carry all before them by sheer weight. They did not expect opposition from the Hindus and they never dreamed that the insignificant band of sepoy would resist the onslaught of thousands. They came on boldly, excited by thoughts of plunder and a lust for slaughter. Their leader bestrode a camel. Many of them brought ponies and camels to load them with the loot. Some carried torches which threw a flickering light on the motley multitude with their loose flowing garments and their bearded faces. Those who know the peasantry of the Punjab can picture the scene, with its suggestion of a primitive conflict of nature: and can picture, too, the abject terror of the hapless banias hiding with their women in their houses, awaiting death and worse.

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The Head Constable held his fire until he could see his sights by the light from the torches. He had loaded with ball, and had directed his men to load with buckshot. He shot the camel-rider clean through the middle of the head, while the vicious pellets, some forty in number, drove into the heart of the crowd. The first wild stampede was followed by a yell of fury. Firearms were discharged at the zareba. Again the mob came on. Again they were received by a volley. Daring and discipline can work miracles, and with magnificent daring the Head Constable led a bayonet charge. None stood to face the seven points of steel. The exultant mob became a disorganized rabble in a matter of seconds, and the Police were left in possession of the field. In the morning they found the plain littered with innumerable shoes, weapons and discarded garments. The affair has passed into the legends of the south-west Punjab as the 'Battle of the Shoes'.

The Moplah Rebellion of 1921 necessitated the employment of large numbers of Special Police to guard against a fresh outbreak once the flames had been subdued. In February 1919—two years before the big outbreak—an incident occurred which, in the light of after-events, shows how near to the point of eruption the smouldering embers of fanaticism may long lie dormant.

A band of eight Moplahs, armed with guns and knives, suddenly attacked five Nambudris, a caste of Hindus living in the same country of Malabar. The Moplahs are Mahomedans reputed to be descended from Arab fathers and local mothers. These eight Moplahs then proceeded to desecrate two Hindu temples in Mankada Pallipuram, and next proceeded to Pandalu, where they cut two Nairs, Hindus of another caste, to pieces and set fire to a number of houses. The cycle section of the Special Police Force which was maintained for emergencies of this kind was despatched to deal with them, and found that they had taken cover in a farmhouse in the midst of the jungle, where they had a large supply of provisions and were evidently prepared to put up a fight.

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The District Magistrate and the District Superintendent soon arrived with the Reserve Police from the Headquarters at Calicut. As it was now dark, the house was picketed and watched during the night, since a night attack would be likely to lead to a useless sacrifice of lives.

Repeated warnings were given to the fanatics, but they refused to surrender and decided to die fighting. The next morning, after some desultory firing, a 2·5 gun was obtained from the Anglo-Indian Force at Mallapuram and four shells were fired. The Moplahs rushed out of the house firing several volleys as they came. They were all killed in this rush.

The authorities congratulated themselves on the speedy suppression of the outbreak by the use of modern transport and the gun, without which they considered that it would have spread rapidly. The magnitude of the later outbreak when the Moplahs slew Hindus by the hundred amply justified this view.

Consideration of incidents like these—and every other province and even the great cosmopolitan cities can tell very similar tales—suggests how impossible it is to judge the Indian Police and their work by English standards. There is no common ground for comparison.

The problem constantly before the Indian Police is to keep the fabric of law and order from falling to pieces. On the one hand there is the lack of any active popular will to maintain them; on the other there is the ever-present danger of their being broken down by the criminal and disruptive elements. Both Calcutta and Bombay have witnessed the most extraordinary scenes of anarchy in their streets, especially in the last few years since communal rivalry has become more acute. They have seen long periods of days when men walking on their pavements were liable to be struck down without warning, disembowelled by a sneaking assassin or clubbed to death by a sudden frenzied crowd: when the Spirits of Universal Insanity and Murder seemed to stalk hand in hand through their crowded tenements; or to ride in the electric



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trams, or waylay hackney-carriage drivers, or peep into quiet shops and splash the cross-legged salesmen with those warm red drops. The mind recoils with a peculiar horror from the spectacle of this aimless, senseless strife; from the misunderstandings of these races at cross-purposes; from the problems without any apparent solution. It is not surprising that some advocate further constitutional advance, others point to the years of comparative peace before the reforms, and others again ask, in despair, what kind of government such a people really deserves?

Writing long before the present crisis, Sir Auckland Colvin wrote: 'The real India is only to be found in the masses of the ignorant millions. To govern this real India, authority and justice should be in full view; but in reserve must be ample force.' Many other observers have emphasized the view that the least relaxation of control easily leads to a breakdown of authority, and have urged that, in such cases, authority must be restored with a strong hand.

As we have seen, a measure commonly employed to deal with merely local outbreaks has been the imposition of additional police.

There were certain villages in Kanara in which year by year the men of two opposing factions were murdered under circumstances which made detection almost impossible. The witnesses all belonged to one party or the other, their statements were usually *prima facie* incredible or inconsistent, and they had often been previously discredited in similar earlier cases. After the posting of additional police to the villages the trouble became much less acute or ceased altogether.

When the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsiang travelled down the Indus in the second quarter of the seventh century A.D. he found a sect of murderers. When the British authorities found themselves responsible for this same country in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries they had to deal with a similar sect (no connexion between the two could be proved, of course,) and some account of these people, the Hurs of the



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Makhi Dhund, has appeared in the pages of *Blackwood's Magazine*.

The Hurs are nominally Muslims, but their chief tenets are the antithesis of Islam in that they treat a man, the hereditary saint or Pir of Kingri, as divine. They numbered several thousands and they terrorized a tract of country nearly the size of Scotland. Anyone who incurred the displeasure of their leaders was murdered. Any official who attempted to bring the murderers to justice was liable to be murdered too. Any man who dared to give evidence against a Hur went in fear of his life. For many years the Police Inspector of that Circle never rode abroad unless he was preceded by two mounted policemen and followed by two others, all with loaded carbines in their hands—and he was always a man of proved courage. The first great drive against the Hurs was conducted by Mr. W. H. Lucas of the I.C.S., when their jungle fastnesses were penetrated by a detachment of Indian troops and Police, and their leaders were captured. The imposition of additional Police could not by itself be an effective measure to restrain these fanatical people. Many of the worst characters were registered under the Criminal Tribes Act and compelled to live with their families in selected agricultural settlements and to work there under guards of armed Police. As a result of such measures their fanaticism was checked and the countryside was delivered from their terrorism.

The town of Sholapur in the Maratha country was the scene of repeated Hindu-Muslim rioting, generally arising out of the old, old story of music before mosques. One of the measures tried as a remedy was the imposition of additional police.

As is well known, rioting occurred in many parts of India as a result of the excitement engendered during Gandhi's Non-Co-operation campaigns of 1919-22 and 1930. In some of these cases this same expedient was adopted.

An instance of this kind of curative and preventive measures being employed should be described in some detail,

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and the village of Sobraon in the Punjab offers an interesting example.

Sobraon is, of course, well known as the scene of the crowning battle of the first Sikh War. It is remote from any important centre of administration and is difficult of access, straggling for a mile along the right bank of the Sutlej near the border between the Lahore and Amritsar districts. A small part of the village lies across the river on its left bank. All around it a great lair of jungle grass stretches for miles. This jungle grass stands thirteen or fourteen feet high, and the great belt round Sobraon is so dense as to be impenetrable except to those familiar with it from a lifetime of use. Inside this no-man's land are many natural hiding-places—ravines, ancient waterways and much broken ground.

This terrain makes Sobraon very suitable for all the purposes of the cattle thief, and for so long as we have any records of the place, it has been the home of 'rustlers' and dealers in stolen cattle, which can be securely hidden in its great grassy *belas*. In the days of Sikh rule Ranjit Singh used occasionally to send a whole cavalry brigade to tame Sobraon, but even a cavalry brigade could do very little in a flying raid. So the wicked village flourished amidst its *belas*, and all around it like great protecting bastions were other villages hardly less criminal than itself. Throughout the whole period of British rule it has been notorious as a centre of *bhunga*, the evil system which eats into the vitals of the prosperity of Northern India. It is a system of broking in connexion with deals for the recovery of stolen cattle. The owner of animals stolen anywhere within reach of the men of Sobraon knows perfectly well where they are, but he does not tell the Police. He knows that animals hidden away in the secret recesses of the trackless *bela* can never be found. With others in a similar plight he repairs to Sobraon, where he seeks out one of the brokers, through whom he settles the amount of ransom to be paid for the return of his cows or his buffaloes or his horses. An additional police post was quartered in the village some years ago, but the effect was

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only temporary. The men of Sobraon soon found means to get over the difficulties created by the presence of the Police, and continued as before to steal their neighbours' cattle, and to make good profits either by broking or by retaining them.

By 1920 they had once more filled the cup of their iniquity to overflowing. The district authorities made inquiry into their condition and found that there were just over 2,000 males of all ages—from babies in arms to hardened old grey-bearded reprobates. No fewer than 600 of these had been convicted of serious crimes, or in other words nearly every adult male was a convicted criminal. Large numbers of them were known to the Police as dangerous, and security to be of good behaviour had been taken from many of them under the preventive sections of the law. In 1919 no fewer than thirty-one crimes had actually occurred in the village, and over forty committed in the neighbourhood had been proved to have been committed by the criminals of Sobraon. Those who know the customs of the countryside will guess how many more may have been concealed for one reason or another.

As a result of the inquiry of the district authorities, the Governor-in-Council issued orders for an additional police post to be established in Sobraon again, and for the cost to be levied on the inhabitants. As there were about 900 householders in the village and the cost of the police post was 10,000 rupees a year, this meant a tax on each householder of about 10 rupees. The imposition was thus distinctly perceptible, but hardly severe in view of all the circumstances.

The next step was to collect the amount due from the villagers, and the incidents which arose out of this legal process afford a striking glimpse of the conditions under which the Indian Police work, and of a state of society very different from anything known in England.

The conditions in 1921 were to some extent abnormal as the Non-Co-operation movement was in full career and the great Sikh agitation which started in 1920 had also reached menacing proportions; but since 1919 abnormalities of this

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kind have almost become the normal state of affairs. A village like Sobraon, as full of ne'er-do-wells as a bin is of corn, naturally responded with alacrity to a movement which tended towards the destruction of an ordered state of society. The Non-Co-operation movement and the Sikh agitation both appeared to them in this light and took root and flourished accordingly among them. A committee of the National Congress, headed by an emigrant returned from America, was formed and a number of villagers were enrolled as National Volunteers. When the tehsildar arrived to collect the tax, they openly refused to pay it and defied the officers of the Government.

The counter-stroke was prompt and effective. The District Magistrate and the District Superintendent of Police, within a few hours of receiving the tehsildar's report of this refusal, left Lahore with 200 armed police in a special train, travelled all night to the railway station nearest to Sobraon, and marching across country in the dark reached the village not long after sunrise and surrounded it.

They found it full of sullen men; and from the neighbouring villages bands of truculent-looking scoundrels came trooping in on hearing of the arrival of the Police.

The District Officers did not wait for developments. Sobraon stands on a high cliff overlooking a wide stretch of level ground, and the Police, skilfully shepherding the men from the village down to this lower ground, held them there under their rifles. The quiet determination of the Police and the disadvantageous position of the Sobraon people discouraged any idea of forcible resistance on their part, or of any interference by those who had come in from outside. The men of Sobraon soon changed their truculent tone to one of appeal, but still persisted in their refusal to pay. This left no alternative to distraining their goods, and steps were taken accordingly. It was a slow and cumbrous business involving a house-to-house collection, and it continued all through the night. By the morning barely a quarter of the required amount had been collected.

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The villagers had not been idle during the night. They had held a meeting and had decided that the Police were in too great force and too well armed for them to tackle. Their friends from the surrounding villages had come to the same conclusion. They, therefore, in the cant phrase of Sikh agitation, formed themselves into a 'Shahidi Jatha', which being translated means a band of martyrs. The Shahidi Jatha, some hundreds strong, formed up in a big ravine which runs through the village. Here they raised a black flag and stood in a dense mass, as dangerous a gang of scoundrels as the whole Punjab could show.

The officers realized that this development transformed Sobraon into a powder magazine. This formation of a Shahidi Jatha might prove highly contagious, and make a powerful appeal to the fanatical elements among the Sikhs and to the innate opposition of the criminal classes among them to the forces of law and order.

The Police had to act promptly and with determination. Armed with nothing more deadly than long bamboo canes, a number of them charged the Jatha, split it skilfully into small groups and dispersed these in disorder. This ended the affair of Sobraon; for, seeing that any action they took would be effectively and resolutely countered, the villagers abandoned their intransigent attitude and paid up their dues.

There remains the final form of auxiliary organization—that of the Special Constables. The Police Act empowers the District Magistrate to enrol special constables whenever necessary, but there are few if any instances of this having been done. The landed aristocracies of India will rally round the standards of the King-Emperor and fight with the chivalry of the Rajput, the obstinacy of the Sikh or the warlike ardour of the Muslim; but to wield the truncheon of the constable against the rabble in the gutters is beneath their dignity. The upper classes in the towns will serve as special magistrates on occasions of industrial or communal rioting, but they are also inclined to dislike the more humble role of Special Constable. The peasantry have never learned to

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regard themselves as citizens with the duty and privilege of upholding the law: but in an emergency will enrol in the 'special police' already mentioned (as opposed to the 'Special Constables'), provided that the pay offered is a good enough inducement. There is, in fact, no class suitable and willing to act in this capacity as volunteers.

On more than one occasion the idea of enrolling as special constables has commended itself to certain sections of the people of the cosmopolitan city of Bombay, which is always prone to adopt Western methods and fashions. This desire was expressed after the communal rioting of 1929 to some extent under the influence of the example of the English people during the general strike of 1926; but the organization has never been formed, so there has been no opportunity to test it in the crucible of life.

## CHAPTER VII

### SPECIAL ORGANIZATIONS. THE RIVER AND RAILWAY POLICE—THE C.I.D.—THE AGENCY POLICE AND THE FRONTIER FORCES

**T**HE MIGHTY Himalayas with their vast funds of snow give rise to two great river systems, one of which finds the sea to the west of the peninsula, the other to the east. Before doing so, their waters spread out and cover hundreds of square miles in their inundations. These two river systems, and these two only in all India, have been accorded, in recognition of their importance, the distinction of having their own Police Forces, whose miniature fleets sail on the broad bosom of the waters.

When the snows are melting in summer, the Indus is often three miles wide and sometimes even a mile or so wider. The Police on the Indus were known as the Riverain Police, and as such had an independent existence for about twenty years until they were absorbed in the forces of the neighbouring districts as a measure of economy in 1922. Before and since that time the Police in the riverain tracts have necessarily been more or less amphibious and have maintained their own vessels. In fact the Riverain Police were a very small body and only patrolled about two hundred miles of the most difficult forest country on the banks. Plans for their extension had to be shelved for want of money, and the patrol along several hundred miles of the river has always fallen to the lot of a few outposts of the District Police in both Sind and the Punjab.

The forests and jungles along the river banks offer generous asylum to cattle thieves and other malefactors. The people who live in them often dispense with agriculture and live a



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pastoral life as parasites of the water-buffalo, whose yield of milk is far more copious than that of the very poor breeds of cattle usually kept in India. People and buffaloes are equally at home in the water, and every man habitually carries a goatskin which he can inflate and place under his armpits when crossing dangerous water. The Riverain Police were, of course, equipped in the same way.

A favourite form of theft among the riverain peoples is to transport a whole herd of buffaloes a hundred miles or more downstream, and then to hide them in the forests for weeks or months until an opportunity arises to dispose of them piecemeal. As they are very valuable animals, a loss of this kind has a crippling effect on the unfortunate owners, but, unless the river is vigilantly patrolled, several herds will be stolen every summer during the inundation season between Dera Ghazi Khan in the Punjab and the delta some 600 miles away by river.

Intercepting half a dozen thieves with a herd of buffaloes in the great river in full flood is an exciting business. They only come down under the cover of darkness, doing perhaps forty miles in a night and lying up in the forests by day. There are certain places where the full force of the great river impinges on the bank, and willy-nilly thieves and buffaloes must come somewhere near the bank at such places. These are the obvious points for the Police to watch at night, and night after night, from May to October, parties of police with boats, goatskins and ropes tie up there and wait for the loud complaints of a herd being driven downstream away from their accustomed pastures. The main party, of course, sleeps, sentries being posted to awaken them at the first sound which can be heard a mile or more away. When the buffaloes come alongside, there is a wild scrimmage in the darkness, during which the boat has to rescue police and thieves alike; and some of the constables tackle the thieves while others are told off to drive the herd on to the bank.

Another method adopted by the Police in the riverain tracts was periodically to round up buffaloes and other cattle

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grazing in the forest areas, and to call upon the herdsmen to establish their claim to the animals. Simple as this sounds, there are many practical and legal difficulties to be encountered. In some cases herds of fifty or a hundred animals were attached on suspicion. As soon as this was done, all the neighbouring police stations were informed and requested to pass on the news to the people who had lost animals of the kind, whether buffaloes, cows, camels or goats. As a rule dozens of unfortunate people would collect from anywhere within a radius of fifty miles, thus demonstrating the fearful losses caused by cattle theft in Northern India; but this is another story, which will be discussed under cattle theft in a later chapter.

The River Police in Bengal is a much larger and more important organization. The waters of three mighty streams, the Ganges, the Jumna and the Brahmaputra, flow into an immense deltaic tract before entering the Bay of Bengal. Numerous channels cover this tract and, in this broken country, are great highways of local commerce. From time immemorial these highways have been the haunts of river pirates.

The famous Thagi and Dakaiti (or Thuggee and Dacoity) Department extended its operations to these rivers in 1836, and found them 'infested by bands of fresh-water pirates having similar habits to those of the land thugs'. In Bengal the most notorious gangs appear to have been those of the 'Bhangus', who are described as expert stranglers. Their proceedings were no secret to the River Police, whose silence was purchased; and the British authorities appear to have known little or nothing about them until the Thagi and Dakaiti Department arrested 160 of them in the first year of its activities in these regions. It brought to light the existence of several 'clans' and associations of these pirates or dacoits, and by its well-known methods seems to have succeeded in checking their depredations.

When the operations of the Department were brought to an end, lawlessness again got the upper hand on the rivers,

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and in 1854 the Bengal Government appointed a special commission of itinerant magistrates, who apparently did useful work in connexion with this form of crime. They were abolished when the new police were created in 1861, in the hope that the Force would be able to deal with the problem of policing the rivers. It entirely failed to do so, chiefly because, as the Commissioner of Burdwan was soon to point out, 'they had at their disposal no means of protection, prevention or detection or indeed of information'. In 1863 a small special Police Force was organized, but it proved inadequate, and boats for patrol purposes were soon afterwards added to police stations to which they were to be considered as floating outposts. Various officers from time to time expressed the opinion that a number of dacoities were being committed on the rivers which were never reported, and the shortcomings of the River Police were the subject of frequent comment in the reports of the Inspectors-General of Police. In 1899 there was an outcry in the vernacular Press regarding the discreditable state of affairs on the riverways, and further efforts were made to combat the evil. Several conferences of District Superintendents and subordinate Police officers were held, and generally expressed the opinion that river dacoity and theft were being committed on a serious scale, that they were assuming dangerous proportions and that three-quarters of the dacoity was being suppressed. It appeared that the victims were usually unwilling to complain because, being travellers, they did not wish to be detained for the inquiry and because complaint led to nothing more definite than incurring the hostility of the criminal classes. It was decided that the existing patrols were practically useless, and that a more efficient River Police Force should be organized.

There was no definite information as to the extent to which crime was being concealed until in 1899 officers of the newly created Criminal Investigation Department of Bengal were deputed to investigate an outbreak of dacoity in some of the riverain districts. They brought to light a well-organized association of some 250 professional dacoits who were using

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and exploiting the rivers. During the next few years Imperial officers and inspectors with other subordinates were placed on special duty in the United Provinces and in Bengal. They collected information about some of the numerous gangs and their crimes, and succeeded in capturing two entire gangs in possession of stolen property. Nearly 400 dacoities were mentioned as having occurred without being reported in the preceding ten years, and a state of serious lawlessness was disclosed.

The Government of India considered that important commercial interests were affected, and when two officers, one from Bengal and the other from the United Provinces, were appointed in 1905 to make detailed proposals, they desired that the Chamber of Commerce in Bengal and members of the commercial community should be freely consulted. In addition to the dacoities, other crimes were causing heavy losses. Extensive systems of fraud were prevalent in connexion with the broaching or destruction of insured cargoes. Wholesale theft and pilfering of goods in transit were estimated to cause the loss of Rs. 500,000 annually. Loss and danger was also being constantly caused to steamers by the removal of buoys and the want of navigation rules to be enforced against sailing vessels.

The whole question was most exhaustively dealt with in a long report by Mr. Bramley of the Imperial Police Service in the United Provinces who recommended the creation of a well-organized and well-trained River Police.

The River Police was gradually reorganized and its strength increased to about 250 men under a district superintendent with twenty sub-inspectors. This force was equipped with fifteen launches and sixteen floating police stations or posts. It was employed on constant patrol duty, and its establishment was soon followed by a marked diminution of crime on the most criminal parts of the rivers. Every year the River Police save a large number of lives from drowning—the number was 135 in 1926, and the average is in the neighbourhood of 100—and assist in salving a number of capsized

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boats. They also control traffic on the busiest portions of the riverways. Public appreciation of the value of this branch of the Police has been demonstrated by very strong local representations against proposals to remove a river police station.

The Railway Police in India are all Government Police, enlisted under the Act of 1861, coming under the administrative control of the Inspector-General of the province, and officered from the general cadres of the province.

At one time their duties consisted of 'watch and ward' and 'law and order', but the former have been handed over to a special 'watch and ward' staff maintained and controlled by the Railway Administrations. The Police have therefore no responsibility for watching and protecting property in transit on the railways. Their work is confined to investigating offences and maintaining order.

Many difficult and intricate questions arise out of these duties and the relations between the Police and the public, or the Police and the servants of the various departments of the Railway Administrations. Crime on the Indian railways is much more varied and much heavier than on the railways in England. Passengers, consignors, consignees, and railway servants indulge in manifold forms of theft, cheating and offences against the provisions of the Railway Act dealing with the rights of passengers or of the Administration or with the safe working of the line. The Police also inquire into accidents to rolling stock or passengers.

The precise functions of the Police and the best manner of their organization to deal with crime—on a continental scale—and their relations with the departments of the railways have all been subjects of controversy. Various committees have sat and reported on all the different aspects of all these problems. Four different forms of organization are possible and three of them have been tried. These three may be briefly described as the district, the provincial and the railway systems.

Under the district system there is no separate Railway

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Police Force, and the District Police are responsible for policing the line within the limits of each district. This was naturally adopted when the lines were first constructed, but the need for a specialized organization soon made itself apparent. It is an interesting reflection on the 'diehardism' of a certain type of mind, that in 1924 Sir George Curtis, a Member of Council, was found advocating a return to this system, mainly on the ground that a separate Railway Police Force was not under the influence of the District Magistrates. In support of the contention that this was desirable, he quoted the views of Sir Frederic Lely as expressed in 1877; and in 1877 Sir Frederic Lely was already an anachronism, as the cause of a professional Police Force as opposed to one directed by the District Magistrates had been won when the Act of 1861 was passed.

Under the provincial system there is a separate Railway Police Force for all or each of the railways in the limits of each province. Under the railway system a railway or a group of railways is constituted as a single police charge. Its distinguishing feature is that, as most railways run through more than one province, it disregards provincial boundaries, and divorces the Railway Police from the Provincial Government which is ultimately responsible for law and order within its own boundaries. If the principle involved in this system were accepted, namely, that it is necessary in the interests of the efficient policing of the railways to disregard provincial boundaries, it would follow that responsibility would have to be taken from Provincial Governments in this respect, and placed on the shoulders of the Government of India. The logical conclusion of this course would be to adopt the fourth, the Imperial system, under which all the railways of India would be policed by a centralized force under the control of the Government of India. This system was actually suggested by a committee which sat in 1891, but it was not favourably received then and is never likely to be adopted. It would cut too drastically across the principle of provincial autonomy.



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Naturally, much controversy has raged round these different systems. Responsible police opinion has generally favoured the provincial system which now holds sway, while railway officials have as a rule preferred a system which would make for greater uniformity on each railway line than is possible under the provincial system. The controversy was laid to rest, finally it would seem, by the Police Commission of 1902-3 which condemned the railway system and the Imperial system and was strongly supported in this position by every Provincial Government in India.

The Police Commission also proposed that the Railway Police should be placed under the Deputy Inspector-General of the C.I.D., as it believed that this close connexion with these important means of communication would add to the efficiency of the C.I.D. by bringing it into closer contact with every part of the province. This conception of the parts played by both the C.I.D. and the Railway Police proved to be a mistaken one, and it has been gradually abandoned. In the Punjab, the Railway Police of the whole province have been constituted as a separate charge under an officer entitled Assistant Inspector-General of Railway Police; but elsewhere the tendency has been to treat them as units under a Superintendent of Police and to merge them for administrative purposes in the ranges under the Deputy Inspectors-General.

The primary unit on the railways as in the districts is the police station in charge of a sub-inspector. Apart from this fundamental principle, which necessarily holds good all over India, there is some diversity of organization from province to province.

The most highly developed form is found in the Punjab, where the Railway Police are divided into two branches known as 'crime' and 'supervision and patrol'. Crime, of course, falls within the jurisdiction of the police-station officer, a number of police stations being combined to form a subdivision under a Deputy Superintendent of Police, and there are no intermediaries between the Deputy Superin-



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tendents and the police-station officers. The 'supervision and patrol' work is in the hands of an Assistant Superintendent of Police under whom are four European inspectors, European sergeants for platform duties, and the necessary Indian personnel. The crime staff and the supervision and patrol staff necessarily work to some extent independently of each other, but their activities are co-ordinated by the Assistant Inspector-General. There is also a staff of selected detective officers who are utilized for the more important and intricate inquiries, which they are enabled to pursue unhampered by the volume of petty routine which assails the police-station officers.

The Punjab system found favour with the Railway Police Committee of 1921, but the other provinces have retained the system by which the staff for duty on the platforms of important stations is under the police-station officer, and the latter is under an inspector, usually a European, who is also made responsible for the supervision of both crime and platform duty. ✓

In some provinces the lower ranks are recruited direct; in others they are obtained by selection of the most suitable men from the District Police. The Punjab has a special system of training for the officers and men of the Railway Police, and in those provinces where the men are recruited direct they are trained at the Railway Police Headquarters. Generally speaking, Railway Police duties are not popular among the peasantry who prefer to enlist and remain in the District Police. The duties are tedious and to some extent uncongenial, the position lacks *izzat* (respect), and the lines built by most of the Railway Companies or Administrations are greatly inferior to those in the districts. Partly as a consequence of these factors there has been a tendency for the Indian Christian community, which is composed of men converted, as a rule, from the depressed classes, to adopt the Railway Police as their own in some parts of India. This does not mean that men of the highest castes are not found in the ranks of the Railway Police.

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It is not easy for anyone without personal knowledge of India to appreciate the difficulties of Railway Police work in the sub-continent. Railway crime presents peculiar difficulties to the investigator everywhere, but in India these difficulties exist in the highest degree. Through mail trains run from Bombay to Peshawar and to Calcutta, and from Peshawar to Calcutta. In each case they pass on their journey through a number of different provinces and Indian States, which in effect are like different nations with different people, different languages and customs. A Pathan railway policeman taking up an inquiry in Peshawar would make as much headway by the time it took him to Lahore, as a Liverpool policeman would in London: but by the time he reached Calcutta he would be as capable of making a detailed investigation as your Liverpool policeman would in Rome. The difficulty is met, of course, by obtaining local assistance; and the cordiality of this disinterested assistance freely given, without regard to the labour involved, is ensured by the fact that the controlling officers belong to the same great Imperial Service. The officers of the Imperial Service all over India very often know each other by reputation or even personally and, in the absence of personal acquaintance, are knit together by a spirit of camaraderie and *esprit de corps*. This is exemplified by the fact that it is customary to conduct correspondence on official matters in the private manner. Johnson will write to his dear Williamson—whom, perhaps, he has never met—giving a detailed account of some important inquiry, and asking for assistance to be given in the matter to Sub-Inspector Khudayar Khan.

The difficulties of language and custom are not the only obstacles in the way of investigation by the Railway Police. The distances are very great. In one journey a goods train will run through great stretches of desert sand-dune, mountain gorge and jungle waste. It will travel hour after hour all through the night, with much shunting at the more important stations, picking up and discarding wagons from time to time. A bale of goods stolen one afternoon may not

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be missed until the following morning when the train has travelled several hundred miles, and there is nothing to indicate in whose jurisdiction the theft took place.

It soon came to be recognized that these conditions made theft on a large scale comparatively easy. When a heavy train was climbing a fairly stiff gradient, an athletic man could climb on to the slow-moving buffers and throw a few sacks of corn off an open wagon. If open wagons were discontinued in consequence, it was not difficult to learn how to remove the pin which held the door of a closed and sealed one. Whole villages joined in this profitable occupation. Guards who attempted to interfere were seriously assaulted by gangs of villagers, perhaps fifty strong, engaged in throwing out bales of cloth or sacks of oil seeds or anything else that they found. As unarmed Police could not cope with these gangs, arms were issued to the Railway Police who in this emergency were detailed to protect property in transit, and even armed Police were sometimes resisted. In times of high prices the thieves became more and more desperate, and the whole countryside along the railway lines joined in the adventure; and in some parts of the country these affairs were, for a time, of nightly occurrence. The claims paid by the Railway Administrations reached colossal figures, and they naturally brought all possible pressure to bear on the Provincial Governments to strengthen preventive action by the Police.

Apart from placing armed Police escorts on nearly all goods trains, various other measures were adopted. Arrangements were made for closer co-operation between the District and Railway Police, and the District and Village Police were instructed to watch places where gradients were steep enough to favour the thieves. Security was demanded from persons against whom evidence of their connexion with train looting could be established.

In Sind this trouble assumed epidemic form in the years preceding the War, and at one time the determination and persistence shown by the thieves was such that the Police

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were frequently obliged to fire on them. At this time it was a common experience for a District Superintendent inquiring as to the doings of some of the best-known bad characters of the district to be informed that they had disappeared—having been ‘shot on a goods train’.

In December 1919 an armed gang of seven men boarded a train near Rawalpindi in the Punjab and started to loot a goods wagon. The Police escort challenged them, and a fierce fight ensued in which one of the thieves was killed and a constable was mortally wounded. In the goods yard of Lahore Cantonment, within hailing distance of the capital of the Punjab, armed thieves and police came into collision in 1920, one of the thieves being killed in an exchange of shots. In the Punjab Police Report for 1921 the following remarks explain very briefly what was happening in that province: ‘When thieves were seen to board a train, signals were made to the engine, the train was stopped and the Police jumped out to grapple with or pursue the offenders. . . . In portions of the province, particularly the south-western Punjab, it was not merely a question of tackling well-defined gangs. Every village along the line was ready to turn out with axes, staves and hammers to loot goods trains whenever an opportunity presented itself. There were therefore several encounters between the Police and looters in which altogether two constables were wounded while on the other side six thieves were killed and no less than twenty-three were wounded. . . .’

During the years of high prices which followed the War this looting of goods trains was rife in all parts of India. Thus the Inspector-General in Bengal, in his report for 1923, refers to persistent attempts to hold up goods trains by tampering with signals or by greasing the lines; and the Inspector-General in Madras makes special mention of the prevalence of the trouble, saying that the gangs of thieves were in the habit of stoning any railway servants who tried to interfere with them, and that the Railway Police could do nothing to stop them until they were armed. In the Bombay Presidency the same kind of lawlessness reached very serious dimensions,

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and for some years goods trains were constantly escorted by the Police who had to use firearms on several occasions. With a return to more stable economic conditions, and under the pressure of police action, the intense forms of this kind of crime gave place to more sporadic outbreaks. Even since normal conditions have been restored, the authorities have felt the need for unceasing vigilance to prevent a fresh epidemic and, whenever there is any sign of it, active measures are taken at once. Armed escorts are placed on goods trains, security is taken from bad characters, and appeals are made to the honour and self-interest of the leading people of the villages bordering on the line to use their influence on the side of law and order. Village headmen are told to warn the people that such outbreaks will lead to the imposition of additional police at their expense to patrol the railway.

Train wrecking is a crime so dastardly that it does not seem possible that anyone with the least imagination could be guilty of thus causing death or terrible injuries to large numbers of innocent strangers. The Police reports of most provinces show that attempts are frequently made, sometimes merely by mischievous youngsters without very serious consequences, but all too frequently by adults with malice prepense and with fatal results. The Madras reports, for instance, year after year, record these attempts extending to as many as thirty-four in a single year. Most frequently they are committed in order to get a pointsman or some minor permanent-way official into trouble, and the criminals are usually other minor officials who are actuated by motives of petty spite. In one case, a number of men who had been dismissed after striking for an increase of pay retaliated by making a series of such attempts. In another, some villagers placed dog-spikes on the line out of spite against a workman on the permanent way. In yet another, some farmers deliberately endangered the line by breaching an embankment to prevent damage to their fields, and neglected to take any precaution in the way of warning the railway authorities.

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A considerable proportion of these attempts are detected by the vigilance of the permanent-way staff or others, but every now and then some terrible disaster occurs.

The 'hold-up' after the Wild West pattern is not unknown on Indian railways, but it is very rare.

Apart from the looting of goods trains on a large scale, theft by subtle means is very common. Whole bales of cloth frequently disappear from sealed wagons, and even from wagons which have been sealed and riveted. In Madras in 1920 the explanation of a series of these cases was discovered by the detective staff to be that they were due to two firemen who were in the habit of obtaining access to wagons next to the engine through a trap-door which enabled them to steal the goods without tampering with the seals. Menial servants of the railway have a pleasant habit of removing the seals and restoring them without leaving any mark of the damage. A favourite trick in Sind was for the staff which was supposed to test wagons for faults *en route* to damage a wagon so as to induce the foreman to order it into the sick-bay where they and their criminal friends could rifle it at their leisure—and send it on its way repaired but emptied. A case occurred in which a wagon booked from Karachi to Lahore disappeared. It was subsequently found on another line at Quetta where it had been emptied of its contents—mixed groceries and provisions—as a result of a conspiracy between members of the railway staff at Quetta and at the station where it left its own line, acting in conjunction with certain persons in the grocery trade. The climax in matters of this kind was reached in the theft of a whole goods train in the Punjab. The train just disappeared. Long afterwards its component wagons were found many hundreds of miles away in Southern India.

The connivance of booking clerks, parcels clerks and even of station masters is required for the successful perpetration of some of these crimes, and many and ingenious are the forms of cheating in which dishonest servants of these classes have been concerned.



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For instance, in 1923 a gang of swindlers committed a series of frauds with the connivance of certain parcels clerks at two of the railway agencies in Lahore. Their system was to book consignments of rubbish or of very cheap goods to different parts of the country under false declarations representing them to be of considerable value. The private marks and way-bill numbers were removed before despatch. The consignees then protested that the consignments had been lost or were not theirs, and, in either case, heavy claims were made. The Railway Administration suffered a series of losses before the frauds were detected.

Again at Howrah near Calcutta a booking clerk carried on systematic fraud for four years by the fraudulent use of goods forms before he was discovered in 1926. In 1928 the systematic theft of merchandise in charge of the goods-van staff was investigated by the Railway Police in Bengal, and after the prosecution of two clerks and eight porters of that staff this type of theft ceased.

In 1929 and 1930 cases of the resale of single-journey tickets after collection at the destination were investigated at places as far apart as Calcutta and Bombay.

These are only a few isolated cases selected at random, but the Railway Police on all railways spend a great deal of time and money every year in the investigation of fraud by dishonest employees. As a rule the inquiries are very intricate, because the systems employed in the various departments of the railways are necessarily elaborate, and it is often difficult to fix the responsibility for fraud without an involved investigation in the course of which the investigating staff may have to travel hundreds of miles.

Travelling without tickets with the connivance of friends in railway employ is not uncommon, and it must be recorded with regret that a police inspector has been dismissed the Service for this offence.

It has been urged with good reason by the Railway Police that it is incumbent on the Administrations to tighten up their systems so as to diminish the volume of these depart-



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mental frauds, and leave the Police more free to direct their attention and their energies to the many problems presented by crime committed purely by outsiders. No system, of course, is fraud-proof, and what is really required is some means of weeding out the dishonest more readily than seems to be possible at present.

As Dilnot has pointed out, in his *Scotland Yard*, the graft and crime which flourished in England a little over a century ago yielded to a system of police under which the risk of detection was greatly increased, even though the ferocity of punishment was greatly diminished. On the Indian railways dishonesty among railway servants may be expected to become less rampant than it now is when the risk of detection is greater than at present; but the blame for the present state of affairs cannot be laid entirely on the Police. They succeed in detecting a large proportion of such cases, and when they fail their failure is due to the inherent difficulties of the case: difficulties in getting at the facts and difficulties in overcoming the requirements of a strict code of laws by which the scales are sometimes weighted against them. They do not fail to detect crime of this or any other kind through being involved in any general system of graft.

Crime of this particular kind flourishes because the departmental system of checks on the railways is often inadequate, and too large a proportion of crime committed by dishonest employees is never disclosed or comes to the notice of the Police too late for effective action to be taken.

Measures have been adopted by the Railway Administrations, both on the State railways and on those under public companies, to meet the situation by the creation of a Watch and Ward Department and by devising various departmental checks. The difficulty and delay in effecting improvements is exemplified by the slowness with which measures were adopted to provide such elementary checks as locks and rivets on wagons, even when the wholesale looting which has been described had been going on for years.

At first wagons were only closed by an iron pin and sealed

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by a wax seal on a slip of paper. To police suggestions that all wagons should be locked, it was urged in reply that the cost would be prohibitive, and that difficulties would arise in providing keys for all the staffs concerned. Some railways, however, experimented with a system of riveting, and although it proved very efficacious, other railways, in spite of heavy losses, did not adopt it for some years, and finally did so only under pressure from the Police. Other railways have adopted a system of locking wagons, and the locks and rivets have been one of the factors in the great decrease in thefts from running goods trains which has taken place in the last few years. Similarly, better results may be expected from technical improvements in the arrangements for the protection of goods in sheds and yards, and from better supervision.

The subject may be a dull one but it is of great importance, whether it is considered from the point of view of the morals of the staff, of the profits on railway working or of facilities for trade.

There is a criminal tribe—a tribe, that is, whose members are hereditary thieves—which has specialized in stealing from passengers. These are the Bhamptas whose hereditary occupation was picking pockets, to which some of them still adhere; but some original genius in the village of Jamkhed in the Ahmednagar District of the Bombay Presidency, with unusual initiative, discovered the special possibilities which the railways offer. This discovery was made a good many years ago and not so very long after the railways had come into existence. The Bhamptas travel all over India, and the records of the post office have disclosed the fact that they have been in the habit of remitting large sums of money by money orders to their homes at Jamkhed from every province and every Indian State. These sums are far larger than they could have earned by any other occupation than theft, even if they had any, which, except as an occasional blind, they have not.

The Bhamptas resort to various stratagems in order to

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steal from unwary passengers. They usually work in parties of from two to half a dozen. They will disguise themselves as members of different castes—and in India you can tell a man's caste and occupation by his dress and his manners and customs—and travel in different compartments. Watching his opportunity, one of the gang, disguised as a goldsmith, will remove a trunk belonging to a sleeping fellow-passenger. He will hand it over to another who appears to belong, perhaps, to the same caste as the victim, so that his being in possession of the stolen goods in the trunk will not, in itself, cause suspicion. The *soi-disant* goldsmith will change trains and go off in one direction—and no one suspects an obviously wealthy goldsmith of stealing a trunk, while the other, dressed as a grocer or a farmer or a moneylender, takes another train in another direction accompanied by confederates ready to assist in removing the stolen property into safety. The trunk is opened at a convenient place, and the property is divided among different members of the gang, who convey it by devious routes to their receivers. Thus everything possible is done to avoid the risk of chance detection on the part of some inquisitive policeman, and short of that there is obviously not much risk of detection by the laborious methods of investigation. The investigating officer has little to go on. The passenger can say little about his fellow-passengers, and the last person he would suspect is the actual thief. There is little or no chance of tracing his fellow-passengers to their various destinations. The thieves have scattered to different and widely distant places and, by the time the investigation has fairly begun, the property is in the hands of receivers far beyond the ken of the Police to whom the crime has been reported.

Accidents do happen, however, and sometimes a Bhampta is caught red-handed. For instance, not long ago two old Bhamptas, both about sixty years of age, dressed as respectable Maratha farmers of the better class, got out at a wayside station taking the trunk of a sleeping fellow-passenger on a train from Bombay to Poona. They expected to catch a train

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in a few minutes back to Bombay, but it was late and they had to wait. A smart assistant station master thought there was something wrong about their procedure, and telephoned his suspicions to the Police at the next station. The Railway Police Head Constable at once suspected that they might be Bhamptas, and told the assistant station master to keep an eye on them. When the train they awaited arrived, it brought the Head Constable, who searched them and satisfied himself that the trunk was not theirs. He notified the Police farther up the line, and they awakened the sleeping owner to inform him of the loss of his trunk and its recovery. The two old Bhamptas each had two or three previous convictions, and this time they went to jail with every prospect of ending their days there.

The Bhamptas of Jamkhed are subject to the restrictions imposed on them under the Criminal Tribes Act, which will be discussed in a later chapter. Suffice it to say that they are confined to the immediate neighbourhood of Jamkhed; but of some five hundred men so confined, between a hundred and two hundred are often absent without leave and therefore wanted by the Police. Special arrangements are made for men who know them, to watch for them at railway stations near Jamkhed, which, incidentally, is some forty miles from the nearest station; but it is impossible for the Police all over India to keep in touch with the special problem which they present. They take advantage of this fact to pursue their calling in distant places.

Occasionally cases occur in which the old method of the thugs is employed—not by Bhamptas—to the extent of giving a stupefying drug, dhatura or otherwise, to a fellow-passenger in order to steal his belongings. There are other thieves who specialize in removing the clothing of Europeans, by taking advantage of the fact that they often sleep with the windows open on a long night journey and offer their particular parasites an easy prey by hanging their coats on the pegs on the carriage walls. These thieves will lift a coat off a peg with a stick when the train stops during the

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night at a station where there are no police and while no one is watching them. More than one Englishman has arrived at his destination, and found himself compelled to alight in broad daylight in a suit of pyjamas.

A sense of humour will enable its possessor to see much of the lighter side of life on the railways, and even the criminals can, at times, afford him unalloyed amusement. Such was the bogus railway official—and bogus railway officials are inevitable in a land of millions of ignorant and credulous rustics—who displayed the resource and impudence of his kind, when he found himself demanding to see the ticket of a sub-inspector of the Railway Police. He was making a respectable income by imposing fines on the many passengers whom he found travelling without a ticket—for ignorant rusticity does not lack the 'savvy' to do that on a large scale. The Sub-Inspector produced his official pass when asked for his ticket, whereupon the bogus official roundly upbraided him for the slackness of the Railway Police, who, he exclaimed with some heat, failed to prevent the public from being swindled by impostors who collected their money by pretending to be railway officials. The other passengers listened with evident relish to this harangue, for it is always amusing to witness the baiting of officialdom. The crime in question had, indeed, been common lately in those parts of the line, and the Sub-Inspector could not but admit the failure of the Police to do anything in the matter. He had his revenge a few days later when the 'ticket collector' was exposed and placed before him; and that gentleman, if he knew the psychological advantage of attack, had leisure to study a few more elementary lessons in human relationships.

The 'pagri collector' is a familiar figure on some of the Indian railways. The Indian railway passenger is full of interest and curiosity as to his surroundings, and a train in movement is a study in polychromes. From every window of every third-class carriage as many heads as can be squeezed through the opening are thrust forth, covered by *pagris* or *lungis* of all colours, yellow, pink or blue, crimson, white or

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purple, orange, brown or green, plain or mottled or striped or embroidered with threads of gold. The 'pagri collector' takes his stand near a station or a bridge where the train always travels slowly, and with the branch of a tree he sweeps the pagris from the heads of the too-curious passengers. Long before the train can be stopped he has fled with his 'bag'. Some 'pagri collectors' prefer to use a long stick so as to pick out individual pagris of the more expensive types. The process commonly results in the surprised owners receiving a smart rap on the head into the bargain. Small boys are often to be found in the ranks of 'pagri collectors', qualifying, it is to be feared, for the drabber forms of misappropriating other people's things.

Stevenson might have written a companion story to *The Wrong Box* if he had heard of the clever carpenter, the unfortunate friend and the wicked babu.

A Punjabi carpenter, dissatisfied with the hard work and small gains of his legitimate profession, allowed his thoughts to stray in the direction of the local El Dorado—the goods carried by the railway. After much thought he devised a scheme in which he could see no flaw. He made a large packing-case of cunning design, big enough to hold a man, and so ingeniously constructed that the inmate could let himself out through a sliding door in one side. He provided slits and holes through which he could breathe, and concealed them with careful skill. He then persuaded a friend to fall in with his scheme, which was as follows. The friend was to take up his abode in the case which would be booked on the mail train to a station a hundred miles or so down the line. The case, of course, would go in the luggage van, and as soon as the train was well away from the station, out would come its inmate. He would take his pick of the rich harvest in the van, retire into the case, and await delivery in due time at the station for which it was booked. There the carpenter, having also travelled by the same train, was to take the case over and in a convenient spot the two confederates would divide the loot. For a time the plan worked



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well. The goods clerk at the station of despatch had to be bribed, of course, for without that they could not be sure of the case being promptly and certainly placed in the van. Moreover, a certain carefulness of handling was desirable, if the carpenter's friend was to be saved from acute discomfort.

After a time the clerk realized that big game was afoot, and one day he raised his charge. The carpenter refused to pay the enhanced amount and, after the interchange of abuse usual on such occasions, took his seat assuming that the unjust demand would be forgone and that the packing-case would be put in the van as usual. Had it not been paid for at full railway rates? The babu, however, had no intention of abandoning his just demand for an increased levy on what was evidently a profitable transaction.

He carefully omitted to have the case despatched by the train; and so, through a long sweltering day in September, the unfortunate thief held out in his stifling box, with no chance of escape except at the cost of certain exposure. He had no food or water, and that is no small matter in a closed box at a temperature rivalling a Turkish bath. Fear of the consequences gripped him and he dared not give in. It was not until the next day that the babu called a few coolies and ordered them roughly to put the case on the platform to await the mail train. These men, after the manner of their kind, began by hurling the case violently down some steps, and then rolled it over and over. At last the carpenter's friend could stand no more. He opened the sliding door, put out his head and begged for water. The coolies, of course, bolted and kept on bolting until a constable asked the reason why. On hearing their story he hurried to the case and dragged out the half-dead thief.

Once at the police station the thief felt that further concealment was impossible and he told the whole story readily enough. A wire was at once sent to the other station directing the Police there to arrest any anxious carpenter who came to inquire why his case of tools was being delayed, and in due course the two friends went to jail for a protracted



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period. If it is true that a policeman's lot is not a happy one, this story shows that the lot of the too-ingenuous thief can be even less desirable.

The Railway Police probably have more than their share of the day-by-day performance of dull routine which makes up the life of the average policeman in all countries. That the unexpected may happen at any time even in the course of ordinary routine is proved by an incident which brought the name of Head Constable Bendigeri into the Honours List and the list for promotion. He was on duty at the railway station at Bhusawal on the afternoon of the 11th September 1929 when the Allahabad express came in at 5.45 p.m. Two individuals who alighted happened to excite the suspicions of some Excise officers who were on the lookout for drug smugglers. Their trunks were searched after they had raised a strong protest against this being done. In one of these trunks, the owner of which was named Sadashiv, were a revolver for which he had no licence and some bombs. The two men and their belongings were accordingly taken to the office of the Excise Department on the platform, and the Railway Police Head Constable was called in to assist in drawing up the necessary legal documents attesting the discovery. While he was in the act of doing so, the second individual, whose name was Bhagwandas, whipped out a pistol which was concealed on his person and fired. In the confusion which naturally ensued, Sadashiv picked up the box containing the revolver and bombs and made for the door. Bhagwandas backed out, flourishing his revolver to cover their retreat. Head Constable Bendigeri gave chase, although unarmed, and knocked down Sadashiv on the rails of the yard outside the office. The Excise staff and another Head Constable of the Railway Police secured him. Head Constable Bendigeri continued the pursuit of Bhagwandas, who again fired at him and climbed over some wooden fencing. Over the wooden fencing went the Head Constable in hot pursuit. He stuck doggedly to his quarry's heels in spite of two more shots and then closed with him.

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Others came to his assistance and helped to secure the man, who proved to be a revolutionary wanted by the Lahore Police.

The Government of India, based as it is on law, requires an imposing body of Law Officers to advise the executive and to represent the Crown in trials in Court. There is the Law Member in the Government of India itself, and in the service of the Provincial Governments, which are responsible for law and order in their own jurisdictions; there are Legal Remembrancers, Advocates General, Solicitors to Government and Public Prosecutors. There is a public prosecutor with two or more assistant public prosecutors in every district, and police cases in the Court of Sessions are conducted by them. Police cases in the lower Courts, those of taluka and subdivisional magistrates, are conducted by police officers, known as Court Inspectors in some provinces and as Prosecuting Inspectors or Police Prosecutors in others. Experiments have been made in some places in the way of employing practising pleaders to conduct police cases in the magistrates' courts instead of officers in regular government employment. The regular staff have been recruited partly from the ranks of the Sub-Inspectors trained at the Provincial Training Schools and partly from the local Bar. The Railway Police have their own staff of Prosecuting Inspectors or Police Prosecutors. In addition to conducting cases in Court, these officers advise the District Superintendents and their subordinates in all legal matters. Even this staff is not sufficient to deal with all the work of presenting cases in Court, and many important and large police stations have a Court Jemadar or Head Constable who conducts cases of minor importance.

The Criminal Investigation Department is a comparatively recent creation in England and in India. Before the Metropolitan Police Force was established by the Act introduced by Sir Robert Peel in 1829 there had been detectives

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—the Bow Street runners and others—but no organization to deal with criminal problems as a whole. The Bow Street runners were thief-catchers and they acted as individuals dealing with individuals. Each man acquired a knowledge of the criminal population but it died with him. The Force created by Peel's Act was an organization to deal with crime; but it had, at first, no detectives. Until 1869 there was no more than a handful—some fifteen—detectives at Scotland Yard; and they seem to have been employed, according to Sir Edmund Henderson, who became Commissioner of Police in that year, in 'an enormous mass of inquiries and investigations for the Government on important matters'. He took steps to provide detectives in all the Divisions and trebled the strength at the Yard. The name Criminal Investigation Department was adopted in 1878 when the detective branch developed into an organization for dealing with crime on scientific lines.

The Police Commission of 1902-3 found India still lacking any such organization. There were detective branches in the cities. That of Bombay City, composed of Indian officers, had been giving an excellent account of itself from the 'sixties onwards. The famous 'Thagi and Dakaiti' Department (it was spelt 'Thuggee and Dacoity' in its early days) had been formed in 1830 to deal with the terrible crime of organized murder for gain. After Sleeman took charge of the Department in 1835 it achieved extraordinary success, stamped out thagi, and in 1839 undertook operations against organized gangs of dacoits operating in the territories of different provinces and Native States, or Indian States, as they are now called.

Sleeman has left a description of his methods and of the work he did. His success was largely due to his methods of employing informers, especially convicts and ex-convicts, who were induced by good treatment, liberal payment and skilful handling to give comprehensive information concerning the organized gangs to which they had belonged. Organized dacoity from being an easy and highly profitable

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business became a far more difficult one to carry on; and the Commission of 1860 had recommended the abolition of the Department in British territories when the new Police Force was established. Since then its operations had been confined to Rajputana, Central India and to Hyderabad, where it continued to deal with organized dacoity only, leaving local gangs to the local authorities.

The Police Commission of 1902-3 was struck by the ignorance of District Superintendents and their staffs of what was going on outside their own districts. While deprecating any interference with the responsibility of local officers for the prevention, investigation and detection of crime, they considered it necessary that a central bureau should be established in each province.

This recommendation was obviously made in the light of experience in England and elsewhere. The Commissioners recommended the formation of these central bureaux, to be known as Criminal Investigation Departments for the purpose of assisting local offices by collating and distributing information and by a small staff of trained detectives. They were to be controlled in each province by a deputy inspector-general who was to be entrusted with the following duties:

(1) Administrative charge of the Railway Police (which, as we have seen, proved to be a mistake).

(2) With reference to crime outside the jurisdiction of the Railway Police, to be the head of an establishment for collating and distributing information over all districts of the province, and advising and assisting (from his staff of detectives) in the investigation of important cases.

(3) To be the head of the provincial Finger-Print Bureau.

(4) To have under his control the Special Branch then existing in every province for the collection of information.

The Special Branches were not concerned with ordinary criminal affairs, but with matters which were the concern of the local governments, namely popular or communal movements or agitations likely to lead to disturbances or to 'political' crime.

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These recommendations were adopted, and the various C.I.D.'s, as they are commonly called, came into existence soon afterwards. The Commission did not consider that a separate C.I.D. was necessary in any of the great cities, but experience proved that they were mistaken. A C.I.D. was formed in Calcutta in 1912, and in Bombay in 1910 by the reorganization of the Detective Branch at a time when the whole organization of the City Police was remodelled on the lines of the Metropolitan Police.

The same Commission recommended that a similar department should be established for the whole of India, with functions similar to those of the provincial departments in each province. It was to be under an officer of the rank of Inspector-General who was to be responsible for the collation and distribution of information between provinces in the same way as the Deputy Inspectors-General were to deal with the collation and distribution between districts, and for the maintenance of a central Finger-Print Bureau for the records of criminals working in more than one province. Provincial C.I.D.'s were to communicate to the All-India Bureau information regarding certain forms of organized crime, such as railway crime, dacoity, coining, note forgeries and crime committed by criminal tribes, foreigners and professional poisoners. It was also to collate and distribute information collected by the Special Branches of the Provincial Departments, and to maintain a staff of detectives who could be deputed to assist provincial inquiries concerning criminal tribes or other criminals who operated in Provinces where they were not known.

This recommendation was also adopted, but some of the proposals regarding the part the Central All-India Bureau was to play proved impracticable. For instance, the collation and distribution of information regarding most forms of crime could be effected more promptly and usefully by direct correspondence between the different provincial C.I.D.'s. The activities of note forgers, on the other hand, require collation and supervision by the Central Bureau, as

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purely provincial inquiries must often be fruitless. Similarly the activities of Communists and violent revolutionaries must be viewed as a whole and not from a purely provincial standpoint.

In this way a policy which had been adopted in England in 1878 was gradually introduced into India in or after 1905. The underlying principle was the substitution of an organization to study and attack problems of criminology on scientific lines for the old-fashioned system by which individual detectives dealt with individual crimes and criminals.

The fact that the C.I.D.'s were not generally established in India until the English model had been in existence for twenty-five years may at first sight seem to suggest that the advantages of modern and scientific methods were not recognized as promptly as they might have been in India. The fact that the detective branch was considered sufficient to meet the needs of a modern city like Bombay until the C.I.D. was established there in 1910 may seem remarkable; and the fact that a sub-province like Sind had no C.I.D. and no central detective agency of any kind until 1914 still more surprising.

The reasons for this slowness of development are to be found in the general conditions. Life in India at the beginning of the twentieth century was in many essential matters the same as Alexander the Great found it in the fourth century before Christ. The last thirty years, with all their tremendous changes, have not altered the fundamental conditions. Even now the great mass of the people—the peasantry counted by the hundred million, the 44 millions of the depressed classes and the 20 millions of aboriginal hill tribes and hunting tribes—live under conditions approximating to the medieval or primitive. Such conceptions as nationality, democracy or scientific knowledge have scarcely reached them, and have certainly not appreciably influenced their outlook on life.

The Indian Police to the number of 170,000 are Indian peasants under some 12,000 Indian officers and 500 British



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Gazetted officers. Even the best educated of the Indian officers, including graduates in Arts of the Indian Universities, have had very little contact with modern scientific thought. The Indian officers of thirty years ago included many brilliant detectives and extremely able police-station officers among their numbers, but some of them were totally illiterate. As late as 1915 there were illiterate sub-inspectors in charge of police stations in backward and rural tracts.

Even now, as we saw in Chapter IV, the Sub-Inspector in a rural police station does not need scientific methods so much as energy, mother wit, local knowledge, judgement, and, above all, physical courage. The essential problem for the Indian Police is, as it always has been, to keep the lawless elements in check—those elements which at the slightest sign of relaxation of control or of weakness in the strong arm of authority are ready to break out into rioting or dacoity, as gang-robbery is called in India. The police-station officer in his taluka and the District Superintendent in his district have always been primarily responsible for keeping those elements in check. Even after the Police Commission had recommended the establishment of Provincial C.I.D.'s in 1905—and the advantages of the measure were generally recognized—there was considerable hesitation in some quarters about taking any step which might seem calculated to impair that responsibility in any way. The province of Sind, which was the last to receive a C.I.D. establishment, was one in which that responsibility was most strongly enforced; and it was more free from violent crime and from offences against the public peace—from rioting and dacoity, but not from murder—than almost any other part of India.

When the provincial C.I.D.'s were first formed their activities were very limited in most instances for some years. They were confined to collating, digesting and distributing information about crime and criminals in a very elementary form, and to supplying skilled detectives to assist the local police in a few intricate cases or in dealing with crime having ramifications in more than one district.



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The question of the respective advantages of a centralized or a decentralized detective agency, which has received so much attention on the continent of Europe—especially in Paris and Vienna—and in London, has not even been the subject of serious theoretical discussion in India. In practice the agency has been almost entirely decentralized. The establishment of the provincial C.I.D.'s was a step in the direction of centralization, but the process was not carried very far in the absence of the more scientific methods of crime classification and criminal identification which have been developed in Europe, and in the absence of specialization within the C.I.D. The detectives in the C.I.D. have not, as a rule, specialized in one particular form of theft or burglary, as is the case in Berlin, Vienna and other places on the Continent. On the contrary, the same officer has been employed in dealing with such diverse forms of crime as burglary, murder, cheating or theft. It is only recently that the tendency for individual officers to specialize has developed with the adoption of more scientific methods, but even now specialization has not been extensively adopted in most provinces.

Gradually the C.I.D.'s of one province after another have effected improvements and introduced more modern methods. The most advanced C.I.D.'s are those of Bengal, the United Provinces and the Punjab, where a beginning has been made in the way of starting laboratories and by introducing the *modus operandi* system.

The *modus operandi* system was developed by Major Atcherley in England. As the name implies, the basis of the system is the fact that thieves and other criminals tend to specialize in their methods of committing crime. That fact was known and utilized as far back as the days of the Bow Street runners; but what has now been accomplished is to invent a system by which an immense number of facts concerning individual criminals and individual crimes can be classified, indexed and recorded in such a way as to render the knowledge concerning them available to every investi-

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gating officer where an individual criminal is likely to operate. In this way the identification of criminals and the detection of crime are facilitated. Formerly the individual knowledge of a detective died with him; and his knowledge could, in any case, only extend to a limited number of criminals and their methods. Moreover he had to depend on his memory, whereas the modern detective has all the facts on record before him.

Criminals do not keep with absolute rigidity to one method and one method only, but nevertheless there are certain peculiarities about the methods adopted by every one of them. There are some who cheat but never steal, and some who steal but never rob. Among those who steal there are some who only pick pockets and some who only commit burglary. Among those who commit burglary there are some who find it easiest to enter by a window and others who prefer to enter city offices by the roof. Among those who enter by the roof are some who use one kind of tool and others who prefer another, some who collect one sort of property and others who steal another. About each such burglary there are a number of personal idiosyncrasies. When these details have been collected and classified with regard to all the habitual criminals, the detective engaged on a case can arrive by a process of elimination at a small group of burglars who are likely to have been concerned in it. Instead of searching blindly through the whole underworld he need only, to begin with, make inquiries about a small group of suspects; and in all probability he will soon find his man.

This system has not yet been introduced everywhere in India, chiefly on account of financial difficulties and also because, pending the preparation of all the elaborate records which it necessitates, there has been some hesitation in the minds of many officers about accepting it as a practicable scheme. To some minds it represents too revolutionary a change from the methods hitherto in vogue to be convincing without a complete demonstration of its usefulness.

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We have now examined very briefly the organization of the provincial Police Forces in India. There are a few isolated forces which exist side by side with these provincial forces and should be mentioned. They are the Agency Police and the semi-military Police on the frontiers.

There are a certain number of tracts in India which, situated in the midst of Indian States, are under direct British administration through the Agents to the Governor-General—such as parts of Kathiawar, Ajmer in Rajputana, Quetta in Baluchistan and a few smaller ones.

Small separate Police Forces are maintained in these agencies. They are usually commanded by officers of the Imperial Service lent from the cadres of one or other of the nine provinces of British India; and they are under the general control of the Agent to the Governor-General.

The Western India States Agency and its Police Force are interesting examples of this kind. This agency includes the old province of Kathiawar with Cutch and the Banas Kantha. The Agent represents the Paramount Power in its relations with all the States in these territories; and in the Agency Police he has at his disposal a force whose function is to co-ordinate and supplement, if need be, the activities of the Police Forces of a score or more of autonomous States ruled by their own princes and chiefs. The best known of these rulers in England is H.H. the Jam Sahib, who used to play cricket for Sussex before he ascended the *gadi* or the seat of his ancestors.

Kathiawar was anciently Saurasthra, the golden land, known as Surastrene to the Greeks and Romans. It received the name of Kathiawar from the Marathas on account of the fierce resistance they encountered from the Kathis, one of the local tribes, when they made their tribute-levying incursions.

With the break up of the Moghul Empire the province became nominally subject to the Peshwa at Poona, through the Gaikwar of Baroda, a Maratha prince. The Maratha power made no attempt to administer its subject territories,

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but confined itself to levying tribute through its *mulkgiri* or conquering armies.

In consequence of such methods most of India fell into a state of chronic lawlessness and chaos. In 1807 Colonel Walker, the first British Resident at Baroda, entered Kathiawar at the head of a mixed force of British and Gaikwari troops and came to an agreement with the ruling princes and chiefs by which the British Government was to be responsible for the collection of this tribute. In 1820 this agreement was modified, and the British Government undertook to maintain peace and order in the country and to collect the tribute and pay it to the Gaikwar. To ensure this double purpose being achieved, 1,000 of the Gaikwar's Irregular Cavalry were placed at the Resident's disposal for service in Kathiawar, and another thousand in the Banas Kantha. These forces were the origin of the present Agency Police. The Baroda Government arranged to pay a sum of money instead of maintaining these Irregular troops from 1881 onwards, and this was utilized to establish the Police Force on an organized and regular basis.

The present strength of the Agency Police is 130 mounted and 1,000 foot police. Their jurisdiction is in the Civil Stations of Rajkot and Wadhwan and certain small areas under direct British administration and over all the railways of the province. While keeping in touch with the Police Forces of all the States, they have no jurisdiction or power to interfere with their local administration. They are, however, often asked to assist in dealing with outlaws, disorders or crime having ramifications beyond the jurisdiction of individual States.

The Agency Police is recruited from all the chief fighting races of India, and on account of its superior organization enjoys an immense prestige locally. The atmosphere in which it works is illustrated by the way in which the most desperate outlaws sometimes surrender to the District Superintendent in charge of the Agency Police in preference to falling into the hands of the State forces. They have been known

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to apologize profusely for committing offences within Agency limits by mistake. In one recent case two outlaws, with the blood of many men on their heads, on being hunted down by the Agency Police, said to the District Superintendent, 'We have no complaint to make, Sahib. It has been a fair fight. The luck was with you, and we have no complaint.'

An encounter typical of many which have taken place between the Agency Police and a gang of outlaws occurred when a number of Miana dacoits escaped from a jail in the Baroda State. They seized the uniforms, arms and ammunition of the State Police guard and made for Kathiawar. On the morning of the 13th June 1903 a shepherd found them lying in the shallow bed of a stream in Chuda State. He at once informed the Chief Secretary of the State, who promptly summoned all the armed men from the villages of his small State and wired to Wadhwan for the Agency Police to come and help.

As soon as the Mianas found that they were being observed by the villagers, they began to look round for a defensible position. It is noteworthy, and typical of the Miana tribe, that they made no attempt to escape. They had beaten off attacks before, and expected to do so again.

They tried a farmhouse but abandoned it as being masked by a thicket which would have given cover to the attackers. They then started to entrench themselves, but decided that the position was not good enough; and finally occupied a disused well with sloping sides which they improved by digging shelter pits in its sides. Here they planted a flag, and invited the men of Chuda—police and villagers—to come on.

The Chuda police had brought a cannon belonging to the State, and occupied the farmhouse which was about 200 yards from the well. They opened a desultory bombardment with their cannon, and the Mianas replied. No attempt was made to attack.

As evening fell, the Agency Police arrived from Wadhwan under a Rajput officer, Chief Constable Mohbatsingh. He surveyed the position and saw that an attack across the open

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would be very costly. He then bethought himself of an old Kathiawari trick, and sent for a number of large bales of cotton. Time was getting short, but just before dusk the bales arrived.

One party pushed the bales towards the left flank of the Mianas' position and the other towards the right. At the 200 yards' distance one of the Chuda men peeped over his bale and was shot in the head, so we may suppose that the men kept well under cover as they pushed the bales forward. When they had reached to within about 25 yards of the well, the order was given and the Police rushed the position. In the hand-to-hand fight which followed five Mianas were killed, and two escaped. An Agency Duffadar, or Sergeant, mounted, rode after the pair, killed one and arrested the other. The Police lost two killed and six wounded; and the Chief Constable and the Duffadar received Swords of Honour from the Government.

In 1923 a large gang of dacoits under a famous leader named Mirkhan was committing depredations over an enormous area, including the north of Gujerat, Kathiawar, Cutch and the Sind desert. The Sind Police, the Bombay Presidency Police and the Agency Police and some of the States concentrated three special detachments, each some 200 strong, to deal with his incursions into their territory.

On one occasion a body of his gang numbering about fifty men surprised two mounted men of the Agency Police. They offered the two policemen their lives if they would surrender their carbines; but, true to their salt, the two refused and, taking up their stand, resisted to the last. When their ammunition was exhausted, they were rushed and slaughtered.

In accordance with the ancient Rajput traditions, the Agency Police erected two 'hero-stones'—such as are found all over Kathiawar marking the scenes of fights of olden times—on the site of this encounter in memory of two brave men.

Mirkhan's gang were armed with a number of modern



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weapons, and were well mounted. The forces employed against them were finally equipped with eight motor-cars and two Lewis guns. The Police Forces of Cutch and other States co-operated with the British Police, and after operations lasting for several months Mirkhan was finally run to earth. He took up his position on a steep hill. This was stormed after an engagement at long range, and considerable booty was captured, including horses, arms and ammunition. Mirkhan escaped, however, and another pitched battle was fought with the remainder of the gang when he was wounded and captured.

Other special organizations are the Eastern Frontier Rifles in Bengal, the Assam Rifles, and the Frontier Constabulary of the North-West Frontier. The Eastern Frontier Rifles have a strength of 800 rank and file under four British officers seconded from the Indian Army. They have been frequently employed in Calcutta, Dacca and other places to assist the Civil Police to maintain order in the event of such serious disturbances as have occurred in the last few years. They were employed in the operations to round up the revolutionaries who raided the police magazine at Chittagong in 1929.

The Assam Rifles have a strength of about 3,600 men under a staff of Officers maintained on the same lines as those of the Eastern Frontier Rifles. They are employed among the wild tribes in the hills of Assam.

The Frontier Constabulary is constantly engaged in active operations in connexion with trans-border raiding on the North-West Frontier. This force is officered from the Imperial Service of the Indian Police. Its strength is about 4,000 men of all ranks. It stands between the District Police and the regular military forces as the backbone of the defence of the administered side of the border. Its functions are the prevention of raids and the capture of raiders and outlaws. Its posts are mainly on the edge of administered territory, but many of its operations take place across the border.



## CHAPTER VIII

### CRIME IN INDIA. RIOTING, MURDER AND THEIR REACTIONS

**T**HE FOREGOING chapters contain a sketch in the merest outline of the history of the development of systems of police in India from early times, through the Moghul period and, during the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, under British administration. They have shown how the early British administrators struggled with the intractable problem of reducing the lawlessness which followed on the decline of the Moghul Empire; and how, after a series of unsuccessful experiments, an effective system was established in 1861 on the basis of lessons learned in Ireland, in London and in Sind. They have shown how the secret of the success of this system lay in the fact that the new Police Force was a self-contained, disciplined organization under its own professional superior officers who were responsible for the efficiency of their men and for the state of crime in their districts. They have shown how the great machine was completed in the early years of the present century by the addition, again on the British model, of the Criminal Investigation Departments in the provinces and the Central Bureau for the whole of India; and how the principle thus applied was the treatment of problems of criminology on scientific lines by an organization in place of the old-fashioned system by which individual detectives dealt with individual crimes and criminals. Finally, they have throughout this survey indicated very briefly some of the aspects of the social structure with which the Police Force has been in contact at different periods, more particularly in relation to its duty of maintaining the peace, under the heading of 'Order'.

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It remains to consider more closely the functions of the Police Force under the heading of 'Law', or its duty of bringing criminals to justice and preventing crime; and, in general, matters relating to crime and criminals in India.

To attempt a general review of crime in India is not unlike attempting a general review of crime in Europe; but, in spite of the many diversities, there are many matters in regard to which there is considerable uniformity. There is the uniformity of administrative organization and method, and one code of law applicable to the whole country. There are the same crimes arising from religious animosities; the same conditions leading to rioting, for the same reasons—music before mosques, cow-slaughter or disputes about land. The extraordinary crime of dacoity is common to the whole of India; so, too, is the liking for the Robin Hood adventure. There is a tendency to crimes of violence everywhere, though this varies in degree in different provinces, being most pronounced in the North. Criminal tribes, with somewhat similar methods, are found from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. The peculiar social conditions which are manifested in connexion with cattle theft and *bhunga*, though absent in the South of India, extend from Lasbela in Baluchistan to the borders of Bengal.

Many of the problems of criminality in India have their roots very deep in history and even further back in the periods before history. The first people in India were primitive hunting tribes. At a very early date, and contemporary with the earliest civilizations of pre-dynastic Egypt and 'pre-diluvian' Mesopotamia, a race of town-dwellers developed an advanced civilization in the country of the Indus, and perhaps on the banks of the Ganges. At a much later date, probably about 1500 B.C., came the Aryan invaders. Still later, but before the days of Gautama Buddha, came the Scythians: and men of this or similar races continued to pour into India at intervals for several centuries. Next came the Huns in the early centuries of the Christian era. Last of all

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were the Mongols, who founded the Moghul Empire in India in the Middle Ages.

There are survivals of all these peoples in India at the present day. Under the pressure of the changed conditions brought about by the invading races many of the primitive hunters have taken to crime as a more profitable form of hunting. They will be discussed in the chapter on Criminal Tribes.

There have been too many theories and too few facts concerning the Aryan invasions for a concise statement regarding them. It has been suggested recently that Brahminism and the caste system, as well as the Sanskrit language, were to a great extent the result of Dravidian and Aryan amalgamation. Assuming that the Aryans coalesced with the town-dwellers of Mohan-jo-dero and elsewhere, it may be supposed that the Brahmins, the trading classes or banias and many of the artisan castes are descended from those stocks.

Among the Brahmins, banias and some artisan castes violent crime is extremely rare. Speaking generally, these castes probably contain as few criminal individuals as any similar social groups elsewhere.

Large sections of the peasantry in the Punjab, Sind and Northern India generally, such as the Rajputs, Jats, Gujars, Kathis, Awans and others, are descended from the Scythian, Saka, Tartar or similar tribes. The physique of the peasantry, most of whom are powerfully built, is in marked contrast to that of the slightly built trading classes or banias. They are the fighting peoples of India and they are easily roused to violence.

Cheats and swindlers are most commonly found among the trading classes. Dacoits and robbers are almost invariably recruited from the peasantry and the hunting tribes. Burglars and thieves are members of the hunting tribes or belong to the underworld of the cities. Murder is a crime which may be committed by members of any class or race, but it is, on the whole, more common in India among the peasantry than among other sections of the population.

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Rioters may be found among the peasantry, who are prone to quarrelling about land or water rights, especially in the tracts where they depend entirely on canal water and irrigation; but mob rioting is a crime of the cities rather than of the countryside.

In the great cities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, and to some extent in smaller places like Lahore, Ahmedabad, Cawnpore, Dacca or Allahabad, there is a criminal underworld which, as has been mentioned in a previous chapter, constitutes at once a grave problem from a police point of view and a serious menace, always to the property, and sometimes to the lives of peaceful citizens. The origins of these inveterate criminals are often unknown even to themselves. Some are so depraved that they hardly know whether they are Hindus or Mahomedans and, passing quite easily as either, have several Hindu and Mahomedan *aliases*. Such men are usually children of the gutters. There are others whose origins can be traced through the finger-print bureau, from which it often appears that they have drifted into the cities after a first essay in crime at or near their homes. Something of the nature of this underworld can be learned from the records of police cases, but an adequate description of the mixture of squalor and indulgence, degradation and adventure which fills the lives of these human parasites has never been written.

Burglary is, of course, one of the means of subsistence of this criminal underworld. It should be investigated, as has been explained, by the *modus operandi* system; but for want of the comparatively small funds required for the purpose this system has not yet been adopted in Bombay City. Its utility is recognized, however, and the records are being gradually prepared. In the meanwhile individual officers manage as well as they can with the aid of their memories and their notes.

Recently a series of burglaries was being investigated by the Bombay City C.I.D., and from the *modus operandi* it was thought that they were the handiwork of a man named

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Ramchandra, who had been convicted several times for similar offences in the past. Ramchandra and his associates were, therefore, well known to the C.I.D.

The burglaries had been very skilfully planned and in the aggregate the gang had done exceedingly well out of them, by securing big hauls. For a long time plain-clothes C.I.D. constables watched the haunts of Ramchandra and his friends and the shops of his receivers, until at last they caught him and four other members in possession of some stolen property. After investigation it was decided that there was sufficient evidence to send Ramchandra and two of the others for trial before a court, on charges relating to two of the burglaries. Ramchandra was convicted in one case, and was being tried in the second, when he succeeded in escaping from custody on the 7th of June. On the 13th of the same month the strong-room of the C.I.D. office was broken open and the property concerned in the cases against him was stolen. This was a particularly daring piece of work because the C.I.D. office is situated next to the main office of the Commissioner of Police and an armed sentry is on duty outside the two buildings. Ramchandra had noticed during the time that he was in the office in connexion with the investigation, that the property was kept in a certain safe, and that there was a small window, with heavy iron bars, at the back of the room. That was good enough for him; and one night, when the moon threw a deep shadow over that part of the building, he crept up to the window and, working when the sentry was at the other end of his beat, broke in, rifled the safe and, to work off a score, destroyed such papers as he could find. This last detail left the officers of the C.I.D. with no moral doubt as to the culprit. Again a watch was kept on his haunts and on the shops of his receivers. Incredible though it may seem, he went to one of these shops on the 20th July. With all his cunning and versatility he could not find new channels through which to work, but must return to an old one in spite of the risks. It says much for the police-craft of the C.I.D. constable who was on watch that Ramchandra did not learn

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of his presence before he reached the shop; but as soon as he saw him he drew a revolver and fired. The constable, a Maratha, made a very plucky attempt to arrest this armed desperado, but he missed him in the crowd when he fled round a corner and up a narrow lane.

Ramchandra now decided that he had made Bombay a little too hot and he made preparations to go away to other pastures for a while. He went to Victoria Terminus, the great railway station from which the mail trains run to Calcutta, Delhi and Madras, with his revolver in his pocket, jemmies and cutting tools concealed about his person, and a long coil of rope wrapped round his body underneath his shirt. There is always a busy crowd of people of all races and all classes at Victoria Terminus, and he seated himself on a seat, near some Goanese Christian ladies, to wait for the mail train to Nagpur.

Unfortunately for him, another member of the underworld, who had a grudge against him, realized his game and decided to take a hand. He told a head constable of the Railway Police that Ramchandra was sitting on the platform, and that he was armed with a revolver. The Railway Police had, of course, received a copy of the police notices which are issued thrice daily from the Police Head Office, and they had therefore learned of Ramchandra's doings. The Head Constable reported the facts to the British Sergeant on platform duty, and this officer, taking a couple of constables, strolled casually past Ramchandra and, throwing himself upon him, pinioned his arms. For these escapades Ramchandra was convicted and sentenced, in the aggregate, to nine years' imprisonment.

North of Victoria Terminus lie the densely crowded areas of the bazaars and the quarters of the furniture dealers, of the dealers in carpets, spices, and oil seeds; the cloth bazaar, the jewellers' bazaar, Bhendi bazaar of the coppersmiths, Mahomedan quarters, Gujerati quarters, Jewish shops and Arab stables and the quarter of 'the oldest profession in the world'. Farther north are the railway workshops, the ware-



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houses for bales of cotton, oil tanks, the assembly sheds of the importers of motor-cars, and above all the cotton mills with their hundred and thirty thousand operatives. Almost everywhere there are great contrasts of wealth and poverty; and the wealth is a magnet which draws criminals from all over India. South of Victoria Terminus lies the fort, the dowry which King Charles received with his bride from Portugal. The old fort has almost disappeared, and round about its site is the most modern part of Bombay, with large and imposing modern buildings, banks, business offices, hotels, clubs and numerous shops, many of them belonging to Europeans of different nationalities.

Among them is a jeweller's and watchmaker's shop with the name of an old-established Swiss firm. The proprietor was in the habit of visiting the premises on Sunday when this part of Bombay is almost deserted except for a few servants, watchmen employed by the big shops and occasional passers-by. Three ingenious *mawalis* had noticed that promising possibilities were presented by this shop on a Sunday. One Sunday morning in April 1928 they waited until the watchman went away for a few minutes, as he was in the habit of doing in the quiet spell just after dawn. Then like homeless men who had been sleeping on the pavements—and there are always large numbers of men sleeping on the pavements of Bombay, either because they are homeless or because the pavements are cooler than their crowded back-alley tenements—they yawned and stretched themselves and began to perform the elementary toilet operations of the homeless. One of them spread a voluminous *dhotar*, a nether garment, some six yards long and a yard wide, before the side door of the shop as if he were airing it. This action was so ordinary as to be calculated to attract very little attention. Under cover of the *dhotar* the second thief forcibly pressed in one of the shutters of the door and pulled the other out, thus making a narrow opening through which the third thief contrived to slip in. The watchman returned and took no interest in the proceedings of the stranger airing his clothes.



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The man who had got in waited for the proprietor's visit, during which he hid himself without any difficulty. When it was over, he knew that he had the whole day at his disposal and could rifle the jewellery cases at his leisure. He had even brought a little food to see him comfortably through the day's work. In the evening he knew that the watchman would slip away for a few minutes again, and he had everything ready at the right moment. His two friends came and let him out as they had let him in, and before the watchman returned they had got away with watches and jewellery worth Rs 90,000 or £6,000.

Cases of this importance in Bombay command the attention of the C.I.D. in addition to that of the Divisional Police, and Rao Bahadur Sabaji Rao, the Superintendent of the C.I.D., took up the investigation. He was an officer who had worked in Bombay for thirty years and had risen from the rank of Head Constable, being one of a few well-educated men who had joined the City Police in the 'nineties of last century. He knew that there were several gangs in the underworld capable of an ingenious burglary such as this was, but he had an almost uncanny sixth sense concerning receivers who were likely to be approached with property of different types. He warned the most likely receivers that he expected that they would be approached with property of a certain description, and such was his reputation that one of them, on being visited by the thieves almost immediately afterwards, detained them on some clever pretext and informed the Rao Bahadur. All the three thieves had several previous convictions and they all received heavy sentences in this case, in which nearly the whole of the stolen property was recovered.

The nature of the underworld of Bombay is well illustrated by the story of one Sirajuddin, the ne'er-do-well son of a highly respected old gentleman for many years the Protector of Pilgrims in the Pilgrim Department attached to the office of the Commissioner of Police. Sirajuddin was a bright and clever young man, who might have done well enough if he had not fallen into bad company and developed a taste for the

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excitements and lures of the less respectable side of city life. After his father died he went from bad to worse and was soon living by his wits among all the riffraff on the pavements and in the tea-shops of Bombay. He became acquainted with some of the most daring criminals in the city and among them with a giant named Nazir, a Mahomedan from the north of India. Nazir weighed seventeen stone and was well known to the Police if only for the fact that they had no handcuffs to fit him. These two collected a gang of Pathan and Punjabi criminals and carried off various coups without being detected. Sirajuddin was acquainted with a large number of police officers through his father's connexions and friends, and he made good use of his knowledge of police arrangements to further the enterprises of the gang.

In July 1928, after careful rehearsal on the spot, they brought off a big coup by waylaying a wealthy merchant and four of his clerks as they left their office in Mandvi, one of the business centres of Bombay. They knew that they always left at that hour in the evening with a large sum of money for safe deposit, and on the appointed day drove up in a car to wait for them to come out. As soon as the five men appeared the gang made a lightning attack on them precisely according to plan. First they emptied two revolvers into their midst and then attacked them with bludgeons. The bag containing the money received in the course of that day's transactions and amounting to Rs 11,000 was snatched from them. The merchant and his clerks were all seriously injured, either by the revolver bullets or the blows rained on them by the gangsters, who immediately leapt into their car and drove off, firing a few more shots as they went.

The C.I.D. suspected that a certain motor mechanic was one of this gang and found sufficient reason to search his house. His wife showed such anxiety about a certain pillow that it was opened and notes worth Rs 1,200 were found to be concealed in it. This discovery so upset the motor mechanic that he at once proceeded to give the whole gang away in a fit of petulance.

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The remainder, who had already commenced to dissipate the proceeds of the robbery on the life of wine and women so alluring to their kind, were quickly arrested. Sirajuddin seized an opportunity to give King's evidence or 'turn approver'; and, as the result of a case built up round his statement, all his associates were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

After this escape Sirajuddin very soon became the leader of a gang composed of criminals who belonged to Bombay and the South of India. Their doings attracted a great deal of attention from the C.I.D. and from the divisional police, but no evidence connecting them with any crime came to light for some time.

In 1930 an important strike broke out on the Great India Peninsular Railway. It occurred to Sirajuddin that he could make money if he could persuade some of the worst elements among the strikers that he could further their objects by blowing up the line in several places. He was acquainted with a motor driver employed by the Railway Union, and through him he got into touch with certain irresponsible persons concerned in the strike. He boasted that he could end the strike in a day by forcing the railway authorities to come to terms by acts of sabotage. He did not succeed in obtaining anything but small sums from some of the strikers who listened to him; but his vanity was engaged and he proceeded to make good his boast by collecting explosives and securing a man who could make them into a crude but dangerous form of bomb.

Early one morning two of these bombs were exploded simultaneously at two different stations in Bombay, after his confederates had failed him in the execution of a more grandiose plan. One of these explosions severely damaged Sirajuddin's hand, and he was detained on suspicion by the station master.

When the C.I.D. officers questioned him, he thought that he would escape by pretending to turn approver again, but this idea of his was naturally at variance with those of the

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authorities, who were not prepared to let him evade justice a second time. He made a statement, however, which when carefully sifted proved to be true in all material particulars, except that he tried to outwit the Police by giving the names of innocent persons, assigning to them all the acts of the real conspirators. He displayed great ingenuity in trying to concoct a case on these lines; but his ruse was detected, and he and most of the real conspirators were prosecuted and convicted.

From the fort a main artery of traffic runs along Back Bay towards Government House and Malabar Hill, the richest residential quarter in Bombay. Along this artery, Queen's Road, flows a constant stream of motor traffic which scarcely ceases from sunrise until the small hours of the morning. Beside the road runs the track of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway, connecting the western capital with Gujerat and Delhi.

An important firm of Indian merchants in Bombay was in the habit of sending one of their members to Surat periodically, to bring back cash from a branch doing extensive business there. The amount of cash was frequently very large and sometimes fell little short of a lac of rupees or nearly £7,000. The knowledge of these facts was too much for the cupidity of a servant of the firm named Kedarnath, who disclosed them to a gang of five Mahomedan mawalis. These five, typical members of the Bombay underworld, made plans accordingly. The servant was to inform them of the train by which the merchant would return from Surat, and to meet them at Charni Road Station on Queen's Road, where he always alighted. The train by which he usually travelled reaches this station at about five in the morning.

The gang decided that, with a haul of this size in prospect, they would go prepared to use force in case of meeting with any resistance. They also decided to take a car in order to effect a speedy retreat in case an alarm was raised, as there would probably be a number of people at the station. In order to secure a car they approached a man who, unfortun-

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ately for them, happened to have reasons of his own for wishing to give information to the C.I.D. This he did; and, having arranged to supply the gang with the car they wanted, he continued to keep the C.I.D. informed of their plan as it matured. The merchant was expected to arrive on the morning of the 28th July, and so on that morning Inspector Dyer of the C.I.D. and a number of other officers found themselves at Charni Road Station at five in the morning in the guise of passengers by an early-morning train or of men going to work in the vicinity. They knew that the gang had firearms and hunting knives and were prepared to use them. As it was their duty as police officers to prevent the commission of a crime, and as it was not desired that the merchant should be allowed to run any unnecessary risk—unknown to himself—it was decided that the gang should be surrounded and arrested before they had a chance to attack the man.

Shortly after five the train steamed in, and as it arrived the car drove up. The five mawalis got out and left the engine running. The police officers quickly gathered round the car and seized them as they got out. They were overpowered before they could use their arms. Kedarnath, the faithless servant, who had been hanging about the station ready to betray his master with a greeting, hailed a hackney carriage—they still ply in Bombay in spite of taxis—and was getting in, when he, too, was arrested. The members of this gang were all hardened criminals and were sentenced to five years' imprisonment each, and Kedarnath, with no previous convictions, received the heavy sentence of three years at the Court of Sessions.

It is not to be assumed that the Police are always so successful in dealing with crime as these few instances might suggest. A great deal of burglary is never detected and, even when the criminals are known, it is often impossible to obtain evidence or to recover the stolen property. For instance, in 1930 the City C.I.D. arrested two burglars in Bombay, who admitted that they had been concerned in a dozen recent cases, and

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that they had sold the property to certain receivers; but some of it was recovered in only two cases. Receivers usually melt ornaments within an hour or two and dispose of the metal, which cannot be identified.

When a gang makes a good haul they usually spend the money lavishly on festive living, on their mistresses or on the public women in the *chuckla* quarter, on drink or drugs, charas, opium or cocaine, on taxi-drives, on theatres and—bathos, indeed—on cinemas.

Gambling, smuggling, or illicit trade in cocaine and drugs, are other means of livelihood in the underworld. In such an atmosphere quarrels leading to stabbing affrays are common among the mawalis, as the hooligans are locally called. When rioting breaks out between Hindus and Mahomedans over a religious matter, or when some other cause of strife divides others of the various sects and classes of the cosmopolitan city, the mawali element naturally comes to the fore.

Communal riots between Hindus and Mahomedans in India usually arise out of the questions of 'music before mosques' and cow-killing.

The Mahomedan regards his mosque as a place for quiet prayer and meditation. The Hindu conducts his worship with music, bells and singing, and in connexion with various festivals and ceremonies takes processions with music through the streets. Hindu and Mahomedan quarters are not separated in the ordinary town or village, and the route by which it is desired to take a Hindu procession inevitably passes a mosque. The Mahomedans insist on music being stopped before the mosque. The Hindu processionists sometimes want to assert a claim to continue playing music beyond a point which the Mahomedans regard as right. The question has probably been the cause of a riot in the past, and with feelings running high it needs but a spark to kindle a serious conflagration.

On the other hand, most Hindus are vegetarians, and all regard the cow as sacred. To a Hindu, to kill a cow is one of the most heinous of sins. The Mahomedan eats beef; and



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on the occasion of certain festivals desires to proclaim the right to sacrifice animals, including cattle, as part of a religious ceremony.

Sometimes one party or the other is inclined to be aggressive, either by playing music in a manner calculated to give offence, or by displaying sacrificial meat in public. Aggression on one side provokes a desire for self-assertion and retaliation on the other; and it is the duty of the Police in India to mediate, arrange a compromise and, if necessary, provide a physical barrier to prevent the parties from coming to blows.

In hundreds of towns and villages all over the country this part is frequently played by the Police; and, to their credit be it said, Hindu and Mahomedan officers habitually act with great impartiality in the matter. It is their duty to keep the peace; but it is not always easy, and sometimes, with large crowds and an electric atmosphere of tension between the communities, some little incident which could not be foreseen starts a shower of stones, or a blow with a lathi or a knife. Then, unless prompt action by the Police or by reasonable leaders of the communities can check it, the spirit of riot spreads like wildfire.

These questions of music and sacrifice are the outward signs and expressions of religious and cultural differences, but to the mob it is the outward signs which count for most and form the basis of hostilities.

In recent years political developments have tended to intensify jealousies and fears as to the future of the communities under the changed system of government foreshadowed by the last reforms; and in such an atmosphere the ancient causes of quarrel have become more acute. Communal rioting has been more frequent in the last ten years than ever before. Nevertheless, there are many places in India where rioting is almost unknown.

Very great contrasts are offered, for example, by the province of Sind and the city of Bombay. The former, prior to the disturbances of recent years, did not suffer from any



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serious rioting within living memory. The latter has been the scene of frequent and bitter communal and industrial rioting for many years.

Among the peasantry and in the underworlds of the cities there are elements very prone to violence and with a diminished regard for the sanctity of human life. Gustav Le Bon, when discussing the question of rioting in European countries, has shown that a crowd is capable of violence and outrage, which none of the people composing it would be capable of committing individually. This principle, being of universal application, is obviously of more interest in Bombay, for instance, than it is in London, where rioting is a more rare occurrence.

An examination of the record of Bombay is of interest as showing how, in spite of many influences making for peace, progress and good government, the various combustible elements have been responsible for a long series of explosions during the last hundred years.

In 1832 mobs of Hindus and Parsis attacked the Police because two European constables inflamed their feelings by carrying out the orders of the Government to kill pariah dogs. The mob destroyed the provisions intended for British troops and stopped the food and water supplies of the European residents and of the shipping in the harbour.

In 1850 serious riots broke out between two sects of the Khojas, the followers of H.H. the Aga Khan.

In 1851 an indiscreet article in a Parsi newspaper on the Mahomedan religion led to a serious outbreak between the two communities, in which a number of shops and private houses were pillaged and troops had to be called out to quell the rioters.

In 1872 occurred the first Muharram riots in Bombay, and that annual celebration of the deaths of the martyrs Hasan and Hussein was an anxious time for the Police every year afterwards until a solution of the problem was found in 1912—forty years later. On this first occasion sixty persons were injured. For many years troops were posted in the Mahome-

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dan quarter of the city, during the last two or three days of the celebration, as a precaution against outbreaks between the two Mahomedan sects concerned.

In 1874 an improper attack upon the prophet of Islam in a Parsi paper led to very serious disturbances in which Mahomedans urged on by a Mullah (priest) attacked Parsi houses and their fire-temples. After much damage had been done troops were called out, and it is recorded that the criminal classes took advantage of the confusion to indulge in pilfering on a large scale.

In 1895, as a sequel to disturbances in Kathiawar, an agitation was started among Hindus in Bombay to condemn the Mahomedans for attacks on Hindus in that province; and at the same time demands were made by the Hindus that the Government should prohibit cow-slaughter. The Mahomedans were afraid that the Government would accede to these demands; the cry of religion in danger was raised and stirred the Muslim masses to rise in its defence.

Emerging from the principal mosque of the city, a large Muslim congregation commenced to attack a Hindu temple amid cries of 'Din, Din' ('the Faith, the Faith'). The whole city was soon thrown into a state of disorder which lasted for ten days, during which all business was suspended. So far were the seventeen hundred men who then composed the City Police Force from being able to control the situation that they had to be reinforced by three thousand British and Indian troops. At Suleiman chowki, ever since a storm area in this turbulent city, a small detachment of Indian infantry were attacked by the mob again and again, and, in spite of firing repeatedly, were nearly overwhelmed. Other bodies of troops had to fire on several occasions. Rioting, looting, murder and assaults continued for three days before the situation began to come under control, and the authorities, with the assistance of prominent men of both communities, were able to calm the excited populace. Nearly 50,000 people fled from the city, and about 100 were killed and nearly 800 injured.

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In 1898 the measures taken by the Government to combat the fatal disease of plague roused the fanatical Julhais, Mahomedan weavers, who tried to set fire to the plague hospitals; murdered two soldiers of the Shropshire Regiment; and indulged in incendiarism against Government property. Military, naval and volunteer forces were called out at the first sign of disorder and quickly quelled the rioting.

In 1904 and again in 1908 the Muharram was the occasion of riots in the course of which life was lost and troops had to be called out in aid of the civil power.

In 1908 a Mrs. and Miss Kennedy were killed by a bomb in Bengal, and Bal Gangadhar Tilak was prosecuted in Bombay on charges arising out of the comments made on the outrage in his paper—the *Kesari*. His followers commenced an agitation among the millhands of Bombay, who broke out into rioting on his conviction. This rioting lasted for six days, being continuous and occasionally serious. Prominent Hindu gentlemen assisted in restoring calm.

In 1911 an attempt by the Police to limit the licence of the mobs of hooligans during the Muharram led to a serious riot, which began by the stoning of troops and police on duty.

In 1919 a general strike in the mills resulted in rioting in the course of which the Police had to fire in self-defence. Since then there have been riots and disturbances almost every year, the worst being between Hindus and Parsis in 1922, when Gandhi's followers insulted and assaulted the Parsis and other better-class people who turned out to welcome H.R.H. the Prince of Wales; and the two outbreaks of Hindu-Muslim rioting, accompanied by cowardly stabbing of isolated members of either community by the hooligans of the other, in 1929. In February 1929, during one of the most tragic of these communal disturbances, when Hindus and Mahomedans were murdering each other in the streets, the hooligans of the underworld naturally took advantage of the dislocation of normal life which resulted from the prolonged continuance of such conditions. In some cases Hindu shopkeepers, who found themselves unpleasantly situated in

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or near a Mahomedan quarter, or Mahomedans who felt that their lives were not safe in a Hindu quarter, shut up their houses and went to live with relatives for a time. In such cases their empty houses were sometimes sacked by crowds of hooligans. The whole of the City Police Force was on duty incessantly during this tumult and they were assisted by detachments of District Police, and by British and Indian troops which were posted at important points for several days. They could only prevent looting and disorder in the immediate neighbourhood of their posts, and by sending out patrols and plain-clothes men to watch and report on any incidents which might demand attention. The city is full of three-, four- and five-storeyed buildings. Except where modern roads have been cut through the old city, which grew up without any system of town-planning, the houses are only separated by very narrow lanes and alleys. In these lanes and alleys no man's life was safe.

As the days passed, the abnormality of the atmosphere increased. Corpses and wounded flowed into the mortuaries and hospitals in a steady stream. The sale of knives with six-inch blades reached enormous proportions. The Commissioner of Police issued orders forbidding anyone to carry knives in the streets. In the most disturbed areas the Police stopped and searched everyone they met, and seized hundreds of daggers, large clasp-knives and hunting knives, many of them newly purchased. Two quarters which were notoriously criminal were selected and 'combed out'.

Following on a series of brutal murders in the Abdul Rehman Street area, quite near to the Police Head Office, a military cordon was suddenly thrown round an area of something under half a square mile. No one was allowed to pass the cordon until the Police had gone in and arrested everyone known to them as having previous convictions and belonging to the apache type. Similar action was taken the following day a little farther north near Sandhurst Road, and all police stations were instructed to arrest bad characters of a dangerous type under the preventive sections of the law.

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Altogether over six hundred persons were arrested in this way, placed before a magistrate and remanded into custody. Most of them had previous convictions, sometimes half a dozen or more. Many criminals fled the city, and conditions gradually became more normal.

During the combing-out process many of the hooligans came out of their houses without any trouble, when called out by police officers who knew them: others bolted like rabbits, only to find their earth stopped. One gang which made an ineffectual attempt at resisting a sub-inspector and some police constables was a notorious lot of cut-throats known to the British police sergeants as 'Jenny's gang', owing to the fact that they were controlled by a wicked old woman whose name sounded something like Jenny.

The lanes of these quarters were indescribably filthy, being piled high with decaying fruit, flesh and other garbage, because the municipal sanitary staff had been so terrorized by the continued stabbing and the general lawlessness that they were afraid to enter these alleys to remove it. In these warren-like quarters in densely inhabited areas the accumulation of disease-laden filth is very rapid, and if the authorities had not been able to regain control and enable these necessary services to be carried out, the danger of an outbreak of cholera or some other epidemic would have been serious.

During the course of this same rioting in February 1929, a mob of several hundred excited Hindus advanced to attack the 'dera' or lodging-place of the Kabuli Afghans, near the King Edward Memorial Hospital. As they crossed the open space in front of the Hospital they were met by a solitary British Police Officer, Deputy Inspector Priestley, who happened to pass by on ordinary routine duty in connexion with a case in one of the accident wards. Realizing that they were about to attack these Mahomedans, who were also foreign subjects and probably only numbered about fifty men, the officer went forward to intercept the mob. He apparently tried to argue with them, as officers of the City

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Police have so often done in similar dangerous situations, but they were in no mood to listen to a single policeman. The crowd swept on, and over him. He lost his footing; and as he lay on the ground a Hindu of the gardener class from Upper India smashed his skull with a great rock as callously as he would have crushed a beetle—and passed on.

Less serious rioting, but serious enough to necessitate firing by the Police on several occasions, resulted from a strike in the mills following on the arrest of the Communist leaders of the Millhands' Union in 1929.

In 1930 the Police had to fire on railway strikers who stoned them severely; and on Mahomedan hooligans who tried to burn down a police station as a result of a police sergeant's striking a young Mahomedan who was beating a dog until it bled.

There are probably few cities in the world with a record of anything like twenty serious riots in a hundred years, not to mention minor ones. The extraordinary variety in the causes of these outbreaks, as well as in the classes and races concerned, is also a distinguishing feature of this regrettable side of the prosperous and progressive city of Bombay. Whatever the immediate and particular causes may be, the general cause of all these disturbances is the existence of a large and insufficiently controlled criminal underworld. Without that some of the riots would not have occurred, while others would have been less serious.

The urgency of the need for remedial measures has naturally impressed itself on the police authorities with growing insistence in recent years. An attempt has been made, as in Calcutta, to prevent accretions to the existing criminal mass in the city by excluding novices in crime and ex-convicts who come in from outside. The Bombay City Police Act and the Goonda Act of Calcutta provide for action on these lines; but the effect is small, as it only touches the fringe of the question. Opinion among the higher police authorities is increasingly in favour of an attempt to undertake measures to reform where possible and to protect society from the



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proved incorrigible by the application of the principle of the 'indeterminate' sentence or by the infliction of longer sentences in the case of men with several previous convictions. It is argued that when a man has proved himself to be an habitual criminal and a member of a fraternity whose existence imperils the public peace and goes far to invalidate all measures directed towards 'nation-building', he should become subject to action which is calculated to break up that fraternity. The difficulty is to secure general consent to a course of action which offers reasonable hope of attaining that end and thus leaving the field open for freer social development. Apart from any objections on the ground of the drastic nature of long terms of imprisonment, financial difficulties, and the fact that the whole administrative system has been in a state of transition for the last ten years, have tended to retard the development of any such new methods in criminal administration.

It is thus apparent that branches of the work of the Police which at first sight may appear to be entirely separate and distinct are in reality interrelated and connected. Rioting and communal friction on the one hand, and burglary and gambling on the other, have entirely separate origins in the springs of human conduct. When dealing with problems of police administration in the broadest sense, their relations must be borne in mind. Other aspects of those problems are equally interrelated. The prevalence of crimes of violence in a city or a district is an obvious instance. So is the general success or failure of the local police in dealing with crime, and the question how far crime is checked by securing the conviction of criminals. This in turn bears on the working of the Courts and the general conditions under which the Police conduct cases before them.

Partly because of this connexion between different aspects of the work of the Police, there was a tendency at one time for the work of individual police officers to be judged by the statistics of crime in their jurisdiction. This is, especially in individual cases or in limited areas and during short periods



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of time, an unsatisfactory and faulty method of testing an officer's work.

The Indian Police have been warned, since the first days of their existence as a body of organized modern constabulary, to beware of attaching too much importance to criminal statistics. Arguments based on statistics may be perfectly sound if all the relevant facts are known, but too often there are a number of hidden factors which vitiate any argument. There are always a number of hidden factors in any given set of statistics dealing with crime in India, or, presumably, in any other country.

Statistics must be collected and recorded: but all the best superintendents have constantly impressed on their inspectors and sub-inspectors the view that their work cannot be judged by them. This is necessary to prevent crime from being 'burked' by an officer who might otherwise be unwilling to register crime which he had little or no hope of detecting. A certain proportion of crime of all kinds is not registered for various reasons, as is evident when a gang of burglars is arrested in possession of stolen property and the owners are found not to have had their cases recorded at any police station: or when the Police seize a large number of cattle from a well-known thief and the owners come to establish their claims but admit that they did not report their loss at the time. Even murders are not always reported in spite of the serious penalties for concealing them.

While the number of murders concealed is probably very small, perhaps 2 or 3 per cent. of those reported in most provinces, the proportion of burglaries and thefts is much larger. Only very rough estimates based on experience are possible. The percentage of concealed burglaries and ordinary thefts may vary between 10 and 40 per cent. of those reported at different times in different places. In the case of cattle theft it must often happen that for every case reported to the Police three or four are unreported.

It must be remembered that the police stations in rural areas are often ten, fifteen or even twenty miles from some of

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the villages under their protection, communications are bad and the Police Force is scattered over a wide area. Something like 95 per cent. of the population live in small villages, and the typical work of the Indian Police is that concerned with the protection and security of rural areas. Important as the towns are from the point of view of police and crime, they are not representative of the police problem as a whole. They constitute a special and often separate problem: but something like 90 per cent. of crime in India is committed in small villages or in the fields and jungles.

Certain figures are interesting and instructive. For instance, the number of murders in Bengal increased from about 300 in 1913 to over 400 in 1921 and to 600 in 1930, while the population was 44 million in 1911, 48 million in 1921 and 50 million in 1931. The number of murders in Madras was 600 in 1913 and 850 in 1930, while the population increased from 41 million in 1911 to 47 million in 1930. The increase in the number of murders in other provinces was not so marked, or in some cases was less than the proportionate increase in population. In the United Provinces the population increased from 47 to 48 million in the twenty years ending 1931, while the number of murders increased from 610 to 730. In the Punjab the corresponding figures are: for population an increase from 19 to 23 millions, and in murders from 620 to 660.

One reason for the increase of murder in Bengal may be the small proportion of murder cases which end in conviction in that province. In 1930 only 56 murder cases ended in conviction out of 601. It is stated that jurors are often unwilling to convict in murder cases in Bengal. All the above figures are those of cases classified as murder by the Courts. There is always a difficulty in dealing with the criminal statistics of different countries on account of differences in legal definitions and in the methods of compiling the figures. One of the difficulties in presenting Indian figures to the English reader arises from the fact that the Indian Penal Code draws a dis-

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inction between murder and culpable homicide. Thus, in addition to the 300 cases of murder in Bengal in 1913, the Courts classified 200 cases as culpable homicide. In Madras, on the other hand, there were only 160 cases classified as culpable homicide against the 600 classified as murder in

The most instructive figures as between the different provinces of India in relation to murder are those which give the number of cases classified by the Courts as murder for every million of inhabitants. On account of the irregularities introduced after 1914 by various disturbing causes which operated differently in different provinces, it will be more useful to consider the figures for the year 1913 as being less subject to abnormal variations. For every million inhabitants there were 7 cases classified as murder in Bengal in 1913; slightly under 7 in Eastern Bengal and Assam; 12 in Bombay; 13 in the United Provinces; 14 in Madras; 15 in the Central Provinces; 32 in the Punjab; 43 in Sind; and 160 in the North-West Frontier Province.

It is thus apparent that the sanctity attached to human life is less in the north and west than in other parts of India. There is a common saying in India that all crime, and particularly murder, is to be attributed to one of three causes—Zan, Zar, Zamin, or as it has been translated, lust, loot and land. The chief cause of murder in all Indian provinces is sexual jealousy or marital infidelity. The reason for the exceptional figures in the North-West Frontier Province is the prevalence of the blood feud among the Pathan tribesmen who compose the majority of the population. Cases have occurred in which Pathan sepoys in the Army and the Police have asked for leave from their officers, saying that they had to go home to even up the score. One young Pathan with engaging frankness asked his District Superintendent to allow him to take his Government rifle, saying that he had not got a good one at home.

Among many of the Baluchis and other people of the Punjab and Sind there is an unwritten law that a man must

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slay an unfaithful wife and her lover; and in the event of aggravating circumstances, such as detection *in flagrante delicto*, this is usually observed. Women who have been suspected of adultery among the Baluchis sometimes seek asylum in the police station, where they desire to remain until the matter can be settled by compensation and divorce. Pathan and Baluchi jirgas (a council of elders of the tribe) are in certain cases allowed to deal in accordance with tribal custom with cases arising from blood feuds or adultery. In some cases the result has been to compose the differences between two families or sections; and in others the lightness of the penalties imposed has been thought to facilitate and encourage further murders.

A large proportion of the murders in India are simple and straightforward cases from the police point of view. No detective skill is required to bring the guilty persons before the Courts in many of them. Husbands who have detected their wives in the act of adultery and slain the guilty pair frequently surrender themselves at the police station and give the first information of the affair to the Police.

A Tangwani Baluch, whose wife had been enticed away by another man of the same tribe, meeting her lover suddenly face to face in a jungle pathway said, 'Murus thi' ('Be a man'), and, without giving the other time to do or say anything, clove his skull from crown to jaw with an axe. He then sought out and slew two of the near relatives of the lover who, as he thought, had aided and abetted the guilty pair. The comment of the old Hindu *munshi* or clerk who read the report to the Assistant Superintendent of Police showed how such things appeared to the more cultured classes. He said, 'Sir, these people are hardly human.'

Quarrels about land or about water required to irrigate the land are frequent causes of murder, sometimes premeditated and sometimes committed in the heat of the moment. In irrigated tracts there is often some ground for dispute as to the rights to the water, and when that water is in limited supply and two men want to turn it on to different

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crops which badly need it, tempers are easily roused. An argument soon brings forth torrents of bad language, and this in turn quickly leads to blows. Scythes or axes are always handy. Relatives rush in to help or separate the combatants, and in a few minutes there may be two or three corpses on the field.

In India as in all other countries there are a certain number of people who have so little regard for the sanctity of life that they will commit murder in order to inherit property. Cases also occur of criminals poisoning people with whom they strike up an acquaintance, while travelling or otherwise, in order to rob them of their valuables. The employment of hired assassins is known but is not common except in the Frontier Province, where it was reported in 1927 that the services of professional murderers could be obtained without difficulty for Rs 400 (£30). This state of affairs renders the task of bringing murderers to justice peculiarly difficult.

In the Punjab particularly, the failure of the administration to bring murderers to justice has sometimes resulted in the aggrieved relatives of the deceased taking the law into their own hands. This is one of the sources of the blood feud. Once a blood feud is started it is often difficult for the Police to obtain evidence on which the Courts will convict. Thus a vicious circle is set up.

The percentage of murder cases ending in conviction varies considerably in different provinces and at different times, but it is usually below thirty.

A second vicious circle arises out of failure to bring murderers to justice. It is a vicious circle of distrust. The Courts in India have been taught, by popular tradition, by the Press and by the Bar (which is not disinterested in playing on such a tradition when defending individual cases), that the Police cannot be trusted: that they manufacture evidence or improve on it. The Courts therefore discharge the accused unless the evidence is 'cast-iron' and overwhelming. The people have learned that the Courts do so. They therefore endeavour to see that abundant evidence is forthcoming

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against the enemy who, as they believe, slew a dear son or brother. The Police are then confronted by a dilemma. They can say that the only evidence produced before them by the relations, purporting to be the evidence of eye-witnesses, is false. If they do so, they will be assailed from all sides and accused of corruptly failing to prosecute a murderer. They can accept the evidence and fit in with it such other evidence of a circumstantial nature or otherwise as may be available. If they do so there are certain to be discrepancies which will be brought out by a competent counsel for the defence. They will then be blamed for concocting a false case. This is not a fanciful dilemma, but one which has assailed many a sub-inspector in an acute form time after time.

Not very long ago an Assistant Superintendent of Police was paying an unexpected visit to the police station at Matiari in the Hyderabad District, when a man came in and reported that his brother had been murderously assaulted by three persons whom he named, and that he was dead or dying. The scene of the occurrence was only some five miles away, and although the man had been attacked the previous night, it was now late in the afternoon. It happened that the Sub-Inspector was out on duty, and that all the investigating staff of the police station were also out. The Assistant realized that this was an opportunity—of a kind which seldom comes the way of a superior officer—to investigate a case by himself.

He told the Head Constable clerk at the police station to record the man's statement in the 'First Information Book' as is required by law and the orders of the Government. The clerk very nervously replied that it would be unwise to do that as the story as given was probably concocted, and that the Sub-Inspector would like to visit the scene of the murder to find out the facts before committing anything to paper. The Assistant realized that the man was acting in good faith in thus seeking to circumvent the difficulties which distrust had placed in the way of the Police. He questioned the man



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very closely and found that he stuck to his story very rigidly. He could not but agree with the clerk that it was probably a concocted story, and that, as the clerk pointed out, the delay in making the report lent colour to this suspicion.

The man said, in effect, that he and two cousins and a sister of one of them were sleeping at a hut in their fields with the injured man, when they were awakened by a noise and saw the three accused striking him with axes. His head was cut open and he could not live.

The Assistant had his statement recorded, and then called for a horse and rode over to the place. When he arrived he found a dozen people sitting at the hut waiting for the Police to arrive. The injured man had been taken to the hospital at Matiari. The two cousins and the sister corroborated the complainant in exact detail word for word. This exactness of verbal corroboration heightened the suspicion of concoction.

The bed on which the injured man, whose name was Janu, had been sleeping stood in the hut and was soaked in blood. The Assistant said to the crowd in general, 'There is a lot of blood on the bed and it has dropped through on to the ground, but the ground below it shows no sign of blood.'

'Yes, yes,' said an old woman with a nod of approval, 'that is true, Saië.' ('Saië' is the local substitute for sahib.)

'When the attack was made the bed was obviously not here, but in some other place,' said the Assistant.

'True, true,' replied the chorus.

'Where was Janu when he was attacked?'

'In the corner of the next field,' said one of the men.

'Come and let us see the place,' said the Assistant, starting to move towards the next field and signing to the man who had spoken to lead the way. The 'eyewitnesses', looking very glum, followed.

When he reached the spot the Assistant found that the injured man had evidently lost a great deal of blood, as the dry grass was soaked in it. Three human molars were lying on the ground in the sunlight. This was explained by the fact that one side of Janu's face had been cut away by the



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keen-edged, long-hafted axes, leaving the brain and the inside of the mouth exposed.

'You see,' said the Assistant to the 'eyewitnesses', 'your story will not do. You could not have seen the attack here from where you were sleeping. Now you must tell me the true facts.'

He sat down on the ground. 'Sit down,' he said to the people, 'and we will talk it over.' The faces of the 'eyewitnesses' changed, a look almost of relief coming over them. One of them said, 'It is quite true we made up the story to bring our enemies, who must have done this thing, to justice.'

'Gharib-parwar (Protector of the Poor), thou art our ruler: be our judge,' said an old man. 'Give us justice on those who have slain our son.'

An old peasant woman stepped forward and touched the Englishman's feet. Weeping she said, 'My son, I suckled him only a few short years ago. Give me justice, Saië.'

'Lady, be seated,' he replied. 'We must hear the evidence. Tell me the truth,' said the Assistant; and, now one now another taking up the tale, they told him a long story of rustic intrigue, illicit love, quarrels and threats culminating in the attack in the night with those terrible axes. No one knew exactly which members of the other party had been concerned in the actual deed. The Assistant pointed this out. A man who sat on the outskirts of the group and had hitherto taken no part now spoke up and said that he had seen two of them, Bachu and Allahwaraio, running away from the scene of the crime during the night, when he got up to scare away some wild pig which had come to damage his crop. He had not seen Walu, the third man originally mentioned by the complainant. He did not learn of the crime until he returned from another village during the afternoon. His story rang true. It was subsequently confirmed by other evidence. Bloodstained axe hafts identified as belonging to Bachu and Allahwaraio were discovered in a ditch, and heavy bloodstains were found on their clothes. Walu was

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able to prove an irrefutable alibi. Bachu and Allahwaraio were ultimately convicted.

The Englishman had been deeply moved by the mother's appeal and by the way in which all these simple and very likable people had come round and told the truth in a simple and natural way, when once the atmosphere of a legal contest had been removed and he sat down to discuss the matter as one of themselves. He felt at that moment that all the elaborate English system with its Penal Codes, its barristers and vakils, its Sessions Courts and High Courts was entirely unsuited to the needs of these primitive Jat peasants.

The Sub-Inspector was a Sayad, that is a member of the Arab tribe descended from the family of the Prophet Mahomed and as such greatly respected by the Mahomedan peasantry. He arrived as the Assistant had finished hearing what the people at the scene of the murder had to say. The Assistant told him what had happened. He was, at first, rather doubtful about sending a case before the Courts based on evidence which contradicted the first information. All his experience had taught him that the Courts were inclined to attach great importance to that document, as being written before the Police could have any reason to tamper with the evidence.

When the case went up for trial the Court accepted the evidence and sentenced the murderers.

This case illustrates some of the difficulties in the way of the successful prosecution of criminals. Others arise from witnesses withdrawing in Court from statements which they have made to the Police, and in India statements made to the Police cannot be proved in evidence. Others again arise from delay in the disposal of cases before the Courts. This is especially the case with the Courts of Magistrates who have to go on tour in connexion with their revenue work. The superior magistrates have frequently criticized these delays, and complained that postponements are often made on insufficient grounds. The question is an important one, as

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delay gives opportunities for the guilty to approach and win over prosecution witnesses and also results in memories becoming blunt.

The following cases, all of which occurred in 1930, illustrate the kind of blood lust which helps to make murder more common in the Punjab and the North-West than elsewhere in India.

A feud had been carried on between two parties in the village of Ganga in the Hissar District for some time, and in the course of various clashes men had been shot dead. On the 11th March 1930, Ladhu and Rikha, belonging to one of the parties, shot eight of their enemies, killing them in a most brutal fashion. In connexion with the investigation, and to prevent further outrages, a party of police was posted to the village. Ladhu and Rikha had absconded, and a search for them was being made in the Bikaner State, where they were believed to have taken refuge. Their blood lust was not satiated, and on the 4th April they returned to the village in the hope of murdering the leader of the other side. They failed to find him, but, coming upon his uncle outside the village, shot him dead. They then approached Ganga firing in all directions. The villagers shut themselves up in their houses, but the police guard sallied forth to meet the murderers. On seeing the Police, Ladhu and Rikha took up a position behind a pipal tree. Of the four constables present, the senior, Ramchand by name, took command and calmly but quickly allotted positions to his party and returned the fire which the murderers had opened on them. After a heavy burst of firing Constable Ramchand saw Ladhu collapse. He immediately rushed forward to secure his gun before Rikha could get possession of it. Rikha ran away, but was eventually caught.

Again, one Sadhusingh, having been proclaimed as an offender for a murder in the Hoshiarpur District and being 'wanted by the Police', descended with three companions on the villages of Karyana and Sandhar in the same district and murdered four men and three women.

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Again, at Choha Khalsa in the Rawalpindi District, six persons, men, women and children of all ages from 70 to 2, were one night murdered in their sleep. One Chetusingh came to the Police and reported the crime, alleging that it had been done by dacoits. The Police were satisfied after investigation that he had done it himself in order to inherit the property which came to him. An associate gave evidence to this effect before the Police, but subsequently withdrew his statement.

The Police sometimes experience difficulty owing to people being afraid that, if they give evidence against criminals who are desperate or powerful men, they or their relations may retaliate. At the back of such reluctance is the ingrained feeling that it is the King's business to rid the country of malefactors, not that of Bachu the butcher and Basarmal the grocer. The same difficulties arise in connexion with all crimes against society, which, like murder, are often regarded by the people as being a matter for the aggrieved party rather than a matter of public concern. This does not mean that the public never give any assistance or attempt to arrest a thief or a murderer. Members of the public sometimes arrest runaways or even armed desperadoes at considerable risk to themselves; but from a police point of view the difficulties of dealing with crime are enhanced when the contrary attitude is adopted.

If the majority of murders in India are the result of primitive and unbridled lust among the peasantry or tribesmen like the Pathans and Baluchis, more sophisticated murderers are not unknown, especially in the cities.

A 'trunk murder case' occurred in Bombay in 1930 which was not unlike similar crimes in England in some of its main features.

On the 12th January a jeweller left his house with some valuable jewellery on his person to show it to other dealers. He was last seen alive in the busy locality known as Chukla at about 4 p.m. The next day his body was found in a trunk which was taken out of a railway train as unclaimed luggage

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at Bhusawal—more than 200 miles from Bombay. The post-mortem examination showed that death was due to wounds caused by two .32 bore revolver bullets which were extracted from the body. It was ascertained that the trunk in which his body was found had been purchased at 4.30 p.m. from a shop quite close to Chukla, where he had last been seen alive. The person who had purchased the trunk was described by the man who sold it to him, but the most exhaustive inquiries failed to disclose his identity. He had first taken a smaller trunk away, but had returned within half an hour for the larger one. It was therefore reasonably certain that the murder had been committed in that neighbourhood. The smaller trunk had not been large enough to contain the body.

The motive for the murder could not be ascertained in the absence of any other information as to the circumstances or perpetrators, but jewellery worth Rs 15,000 or over £1,000 was missing from the jeweller's person.

It was not until nearly a year after the crime that the Police obtained any clue as to the murderer. It came about through his quarrelling with some of his servants, who began to voice their suspicion that he was concerned in the jeweller's death. This servants' talk soon reached the ears of the City C.I.D. officers, who made arrangements to get further details from this source. They learned that one of the servants of a well-connected man named Haji Abu Bakar had disappeared since the time of the murder; and that he was believed by the other servants to have purchased the trunk. The description given of this missing servant was found to tally with that of the purchaser as given by the salesman.

Some of the jewellery was then found in the possession of Haji Abu Bakar or in that of persons to whom he had passed it on. The missing servant was traced and made a full confession. His master had induced the jeweller to bring the property to his house and had then shot him dead. When he went to bring the first trunk, which proved too small, he knew nothing of what had happened, and his master then

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had to take him into his confidence and persuade him to assist in getting the larger trunk and sending it away by train.

The motive for the crime was greed on the part of a man who had lost money through the depression in trade caused by the boycott or the slump or both. He was hanged.

In short, murder in India, as in England and in all other countries, is a sordid and unpleasant subject. Probably no normal police officer who has witnessed the tragedy which these crimes bring into the lives of innocent people, whether in Indian or in English cities and villages, can read the 'thrillers' and so-called detective stories which have recently become popular. They are too far from reality to be entertaining; but even this type of fiction is not quite so remote from the truth as the atmosphere created by the sensational Press in its reports of murder cases in England.

## CHAPTER IX

### SOME FORMS OF CRIME PECULIAR TO INDIA

**S**UCH BROAD divisions of crime as murder, robbery or theft cannot be described as peculiar to any country: but the form or manner of theft or murder may be so. Thus thuggee and suttee (now spelt thagi and sati) were forms of crime peculiar to India, which under the pressure of various influences exerted by the British have become virtually extinct.

Traces of these practices survive, however, in a modified form and come to notice as isolated instances or at infrequent intervals. There is now nothing like the old association of thugs with a pretence to religious sanction which was stamped out by Sleeman and the Thuggee and Dacoity Department in the 'thirties of last century. Murder for gain by strangling or the use of poison or by other means occasionally occurs.

When a special inquiry was made into the criminal conditions on the waterways of Bengal at the beginning of the present century, attention was drawn to a local revival in Eastern Bengal of a form of crime with some of the features of thagi.

In June 1904 two men, Ali Mahomed and Sheikh Sonar, were persuaded to join a party to make the famous pilgrimage to Mecca. As is well known, people from all over the world make this pilgrimage undeterred by distances, dangers or difficulties. For the poor and ignorant these are not inconsiderable; but under the influence of religious zeal men walk for thousands of miles across Asia, or, though they may never have seen the sea before, embark on frail sailing vessels or crowded pilgrim steamers. There are pious foundations



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to assist the pilgrims in all the great ports of the East, and a number of persons make an honest living by administering to their needs. Sometimes sharpers of different kinds impose on the credulity of ignorant pilgrims in strange lands; but Ali Mahomed and Sheikh Sonar fell into sinister hands in their own country. They had joined a party led by one Tajum-ud-din, who claimed to be a guide to Mecca. Having collected all their money, which amounted to about Rs 100, they set off with the party in a boat on the river.

Ali Mahomed was awakened in the night to the horrible realization that a man was trying to throttle him, while others held his hands and feet. He also perceived that Sheikh Sonar was being treated in the same way. Eventually they were both thrown overboard. By a miracle, as it seemed, he recovered his senses and swam ashore, but Sheikh Sonar was killed.

The police inquiry which followed led to Tajum-ud-din and one of his associates being transported to the Andamans for life. It also disclosed the fact that a gang of men, all residents of the Dacca District, had no other occupation than to pose as Meccan guides in order to rob their victims. Members of the gang made statements describing a number of murders committed in the same manner, and other inquiries indicated that considerable numbers of people who went on the Haj pilgrimage from that neighbourhood never returned.

The piracy on the rivers of Bengal comes within the four corners of the law as dacoity. Dacoity is defined in the Indian Penal Code as robbery committed by five or more persons; and robbery in turn is defined as extortion in the course of which any person is induced by fear of instant death or instant hurt to part with any property. Theft becomes robbery when, in order to remove the property, the thief places any person in similar fear. The Indian Penal Code further lays down that when any number of persons agree together to commit dacoity or theft or any of a number of other offences and any overt act is done in pursuance of

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this common purpose, they shall all be punishable for thus conspiring to commit the offence. Under these provisions of the law the Indian Police have frequently taken action against large associations of persons engaged in organized crime.

Such a case was that of the King-Emperor versus Makbul Khan, *alias* Nikoria, and thirty-four others tried in the Sessions Court at Mymensingh in 1906.

For many years the waterways between Dacca and Sylhet in the valley of the Meghna had been notoriously unsafe as being infested by river pirates who generally managed to evade the clutches of the law. In the year 1880 one Kadir and five others of a gang said to be descended from the old Chora river pirates of Sylhet were caught and convicted of being in possession of property obtained by piratical acts on the rivers. The Judge who heard the case thought it necessary to pass severe sentences because, as he said, the organized dacoity committed on the rivers was difficult to bring home to the offenders. After this conviction a portion of the gang composed of twenty-eight men with their families moved from Bhatidol where they were then settled to Kholapara, and a quarter of a century later the old zemindar or landowner of Bhatidol testified to the difficulties which he had experienced in ejecting the members of that generation of the gang from the villages in his estate. It was proved that the profession of river pirate was an hereditary one. Those who were boys in the dacoities of the 'eighties were the chief members of the gang who were charged in the Sessions Court in 1906, and in 1904 a new lot of recruits, boys of fifteen years of age, under training for future operations, took part in the dacoity at Kadamchal.

Makbul Khan was a young man when the section of the gang to which he belonged moved to Kholapara, but he was even in those days the acknowledged leader of that section. He was the owner of a fast 'sarangha' boat which was used in acts of piracy because it was too fast for anything else on the river to catch it.

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In the year 1883 Makbul Khan with some of his associates was arrested in connexion with a raid at Gaglajung and though convicted was released by order of the Appellate Court. From that day his fame as a pirate leader grew until his good fortune and his *ikbal* (his 'star' is an English equivalent) were universally acknowledged on those waters, and he could always command a following for any enterprise.

In view of the disclosures in the Gaglajung affair he considered a change of quarters desirable, and emigrated to a place called Shimalbagh, which served as the base of the gang's operations until about 1891. From that base twenty-six piratical raids were made in about eight years.

As a typical instance, the affair known as the 'Damra dacoity' is of interest. The preliminaries were planned at a meeting of the *panchayat* (committee) of the gang at Makbul Khan's house. In accordance with those plans a party of five pirates under Makbul Khan's leadership sailed in a 'bipari' (trading) boat hired for the purpose in the guise of peaceful traders. They sailed down the Meghna, ostensibly to trade at Narayangunj, but the trusty *sarangha* was astern and the bipari boat carried a store of weapons, big fish harpoons, safe-breaking instruments, jack-knives and daggers.

At Damra they came upon another bipari boat moored for the night. The pirates passed quietly downstream and anchored a mile or so farther on. A scout was sent out to reconnoitre. He slipped across after they had passed their intended prey, and gained access to it by asking for tobacco. Having learned all there was to know about the inmates and their cargo, he rejoined his friends and reported the results of his survey to Makbul Khan.

At midnight the pirates issued forth in the *sarangha*, boarded the bipari boat, surprised the crew and completely overawed them, took Rs 2,000 in cash and left as quietly and mysteriously as they had come. They went straight to their own bipari boat, hoisted the anchor aboard and set sail. By dawn next morning they had anchored off Narayangunj,

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where they purchased a quantity of merchandise. With this loaded in the decoy, they returned home as honest traders.

By 1891 Makbul Khan's section of the original gang had drawn so much attention to itself that the Police, unable to obtain evidence sufficient to secure a conviction on a substantive charge, were endeavouring to take action against individual members of the gang under the preventive sections of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Makbul Khan himself had spent a short period under arrest in connexion with a river dacoity, but had again escaped on making an appeal to the High Court. To avoid attracting too much attention he split the gang into five parties, and these parties dispersed and settled in five different villages. After their dispersal they continued to work together as members of the same gang. Their sole occupation was piracy and dacoity. They were known all over the neighbourhood as dacoits, but they secured the protection of influential local landowners and they corrupted the local police.

In all the different villages in which they settled, their huts were built on the same lines. They were always situated in an isolated part of the village or on land reclaimed from the river. They were constructed in two rows close together with a broad passage in the middle. In this passage their committees met and concerted plans for their operations. After their dispersal from Shimalbagh twenty-five expeditions were organized from two centres at Moheshakhandi and Kaktungra and, because of the notoriety attained by these two centres, two constables were posted to each of these villages. This, however, proved to be a serious mistake. Isolated and alone among large gangs of professional pirates, the constables could effect nothing save at the risk of being murdered. They made a virtue of necessity and, with one or two honourable exceptions, joined hands with the criminals whom they were deputed to watch. That the gang was capable of desperate measures was proved by incidents like that in the Maharkhana dacoity in 1899 when, being dis-

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appointed at raiding a boat which contained nothing but earthenware pots, they murdered the unfortunate owner after burning his vessel. Having bought over the Police,—and they bribed a sub-inspector in addition to the constables,—the gang worked with the greatest confidence. The discreditable part played by the subordinate police came to the notice of the higher officers as the result of a dacoity in which two of the constables were actually implicated, and this resulted in the removal of the corrupt officers. The Kak-tungra section of the gang thereupon again split up and emigrated to other villages.

In 1897 some of the gang who had been convicted and were in jail were released according to time-honoured custom on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. They signalized their appreciation of this act of royal clemency by indulging in their old pursuits with renewed energy, and in the meantime Makbul Khan's *ikbal* never deserted him. He was arrested on four different occasions, but in every case was acquitted by the Sessions Court or released by the High Court on appeal.

In 1903 and 1904 the gang embarked on more ambitious enterprises. They attacked hamlets on the river banks and looted a steamer station. They went on long voyages, taking dancing and singing boys to beguile the time. They elaborated a code of signals by which they were able to work together in different boats and carry out three or four dacoities in one night.

In 1905 these organized depredations had become so serious, and the repeated acquittals had made the men so daring, that the pirates had come to regard themselves as 'masters on the waters'.

The Criminal Investigation Department was therefore called in to deal with a problem which had proved too difficult for the District Police to solve. They resolved if possible to obtain, from among the convicts then in jail, one who would give them reliable secret information concerning the inner workings of this gang of pirates in the

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approved manner employed of old by the Thuggee and Dacoity Department.

In this they succeeded, and the case of the King-Emperor versus Makbul Khan, *alias* Nikoria, and thirty-four others was the result. These thirty-five hardened criminals were all sentenced to considerable terms of imprisonment, but the inquiry proved that they had no less than 200 other associates scattered in the villages of the Sylhet and Mymensingh Districts. Nor was this the end of the problem, for there were other gangs in other parts of the vast network of waterways.

In 1900 Inspector Ram Saday Mukerji had instituted the case known as the 'Karnasuti Gang case' against an association of river pirates at Pabna. The details of this case throw a great deal of light on the conditions then prevailing on the Brahmaputra and its tributaries in Bengal.

After hearing the evidence the Sessions Judge came to the conclusion that the origin of the gang was lost in remote antiquity, but that its existence could be traced back for forty-five years to 1855, when the leader of that time was convicted for dacoity. It was proved in evidence that the gang consisted of some 250 persons, and that they had a constitution of their own. The leader was known as 'captain' and under him were others ranking as 'jemadars' and 'sirdars'. The rank and file were called 'paiks' and there were 'kujiwals' or spies and scouts. Next in rank to the Captain was the ostad or trainer of young dacoits, and the occupation of dacoit was an hereditary one. The leader from 1855 to 1880 had been one Munshi Akandu, who met his death when raiding the village of Salenda in Serajgang. He was followed by Gopal Sirdar, *alias* Bedoo Pramanik, who was arrested and sentenced to transportation for life in 1892. The next leader was the most intrepid of the three, Mohar Khan by name, a man of fine physique and commanding presence. Sixty-seven dacoities were proved to have been committed by the gang between the years 1890 and 1899. In some of these boats were robbed and in others houses and villages were attacked. The final achievement of



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Mohar Khan was a highway dacoity, in which, after skilled work by the scouts, the employees of the famous firm of Ralli Brothers were robbed of Rs 30,000 in cash. The scouts found out exactly how and when the money was to be drawn from the treasury and the route by which it was to be transported. They learned the strength of the escort. Mohar laid his plans with elaborate care, selected the most suitable ground for the attack, summoned a boat from a distant place and kept it in readiness to remove the loot. Then he fell upon the escort at the prearranged spot, placed the loot on the boat, and before the affair had been reported to the Police he was well on his way to Calcutta. During the voyage the loot was divided, the lion's share going to Mohar Khan. On arrival in Calcutta he posed as a grain merchant, and then, fearing that the Police would trace him, he went on the pilgrimage to Mecca. A year later, on return from the Haj, he tried to pass himself off as a merchant of Mecca, but was arrested by the Police and identified. He was eventually transported for life to the Andaman Islands and so passed out of sight after being one of the most famous outlaws of modern times in Bengal.

The Karnasuti gang worked on dry land as much as on the water, though they made frequent use of boats as must everyone who travels much in that part of Bengal. Between 600 and 800 cases of dacoity are reported annually to the Police in the present Province of Bengal which has a population of 48 millions. Most of these are serious cases and only a round dozen of them occur on the rivers now patrolled and guarded by the River Police.

Before the War the annual number of dacoities reported in Bengal was under 300, but in 1915 it rose to 650. Since then it has only once fallen much below that figure, to 570 in 1920. In 1930 it reached the surprising figure of 1,100.

The reasons given for this state of affairs were in the first instance the unrest and excitement engendered by the War and the rumours arising from it which led the criminal classes to think that they would be able to do what they



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liked without interference from the authorities. At the same time the slump in the jute trade with consequent unemployment and high prices arising from war conditions were contributory factors.

There was an improvement at the end of the War, but in 1919 cyclones and a series of floods combined with the lawlessness which followed from Gandhi's first Non-Co-operation movement led to a further increase in dacoity. A feature of this time was the formation of mixed gangs of ordinary criminals and *bhadralog* or better-class Bengalis belonging to the politically minded classes. There was a further rise to over 800 cases in 1928 which the Inspector-General attributed to economic distress. The rise to 1,100 in 1930 was connected with the lawlessness due to Gandhi's second Non-Co-operation campaign.

There has thus been a gradual deterioration of conditions in Bengal. Among the general reasons assigned by the Inspector-General in his report for 1929 were the extension of railways and motor-transport facilities, the abolition of a large number of police stations, the increasing difficulty of taking preventive action as a result of rulings of the High Court, a growing tendency on the part of Magistrates to release known dacoits on bail, and increased facilities for acquiring firearms.

The result has been a reversion to conditions probably not dissimilar as regards the extent of crime to those which obtained in the days of Warren Hastings. In those days the British readily suppressed the gangs of freebooters who roamed the country during the disorders following on the decline of the Moghul administration, but, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, they had great difficulty in dealing with the problem presented by dacoits and robbers.

In the 'Fifth Report' of the Select Committee of Parliament which in 1813 drew attention to the deterioration of the Police at that time, particularly in Bengal, emphasis was laid on the immunity enjoyed by dacoits and the difficulty experienced in dealing with them. The Report recalled that

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‘as long ago as 1772’ the Committee of Circuit had described the dacoits of Bengal as ‘not like the robbers in England, individuals driven to such courses by sudden want; they are robbers by profession, and even by birth; they are formed into regular communities, and their families subsist by the spoils they bring home to them’.

They also referred to a report by the Magistrate of Dacca, who, writing to the Government in 1802, had said:

‘Dacoits glory in the dread name they inspire;—their names and characters are familiar to all the inhabitants. No one would give evidence against them, and Magistrates are unable to convict them for that reason.’

Dacoity is prevalent in most parts of India, in British India and in the Indian States. It is most prevalent in Bengal and the United Provinces, both of which with a population of about 48 million have normally recorded about 700 cases in recent years. The Punjab with 24 million people records about 600 cases; Madras with 48 million about 200; Bombay with 22 million about 150; and the Central Provinces with 16 million about 50 cases.

The typical dacoity at the present day is a crime of a furtive type. It is committed at night by a gang of some thirty ruffians who hold up a small village or one or two houses therein, ransack their objective, beat a more or less hurried retreat with the loot, and then go to earth as gipsy-like wanderers, ordinary peasants or herdsmen. They are always armed with such weapons as axes, spears or swords, and in about fifty per cent. of the cases some of the gang have firearms. They are likely to murder anyone who resists. In an extraordinary number of cases no resistance is offered, but on the other hand the police reports contain many stirring accounts of stout resistance offered by villagers, armed and unarmed, and many stories of dacoits being beaten off or captured by the people, in spite of serious casualties.

There are variations on this theme. For instance, road dacoities are fairly common in some provinces, when a gang of dacoits, instead of attacking a village, will waylay people

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travelling on the roads and rob them. A gang of twenty Bhils will thus, armed with nothing more formidable than sticks and stones, waylay a number of banias and deprive them of anything worth taking; or they will hold up a string of a dozen carts returning after dark from the weekly market, and relieve the men and women of their jewellery. Sometimes, when a gang has become known to the Police and individual members are 'wanted', they naturally become outlaws and then keep together, hiding in the jungles and forests and in isolated dwellings where their friends will give shelter. The only truly romantic stories of outlaws come from the small province of Kathiawar, where, before the establishment of the Rajasthanik Court in 1873, the land-owning aristocracy, in the course of disputes with the Princes of the numerous small States which compose the peninsula of Saurashtra, often 'went out'. They 'went out' in order to make things so unpleasant for the Ruler with whom they were at loggerheads as to induce him to right their wrongs or come to terms with them. They went into outlawry accompanied by bands of armed followers, well mounted on the famous Kathi steeds, and accompanied by their family bards who sang and composed stirring ballads in honour of their exploits.

One of the most famous of these outlaws was Bava Vala, whose father Raning Vala 'went out' when the British, who had succeeded to the Maratha suzerainty in Western India, decided against his claim to certain villages in the Gir country. The intrigues which led to this claim had been set on foot in the generation previous to the British ascendancy, and the matter was a very involved one. Raning Vala died an outlaw and his son pursued the same object in the same manner. He ravaged all the country for some years; and he finally succeeded in recovering his father's lands in 1820.

Those days are in the forgotten past, but Kathiawar has retained her ancient chivalry. Her princes, proud of their royal and ancient lineage, rule their wide domains mindful alike of the splendours of the past and of the needs of the

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present. Her bards still sing the stories of heroic deeds. Among the ballads is one which celebrates an encounter in which both leaders were slain in 1883. One was an ordinary dacoit, a Miana by race of the name of Vala Namuri, whose death was his chief claim to fame, and the other was Lieutenant Gordon, a political officer, who most gallantly led a charge of the Agency Mounted Police on the outlaws' position. Another ballad celebrates a similar charge in 1894 led by Mr. Souter, afterwards Inspector-General of Police in the Bombay Presidency, against an entrenched position occupied by a gang of Miana dacoits. In this case the dacoit leader met his death, but he failed to attain to fame as he, fortunately, did not succeed in killing the other leader. The Mianas—descended, it is said, from the kindred of the ancient Median rulers of Persia—are the most determined dacoits in Kathiawar. They are extremely hardy, and will cover great distances when making their raids. They execute them with a skill and fearlessness which leaves no doubt that they would make good soldiers.

On two or three occasions in recent years Miana gangs have gone *Barwatia*, or 'out on the road', and police forces 200 or 300 strong, combined sometimes with the Cavalry from some of the States, have been required to deal with them. As Mr. Souter said of them, they have frequently shown fight when brought to bay. He wrote: 'They have always shown great judgement in selecting ground which has made it difficult to attack them, and they have invariably improved the natural advantages of their position by either digging trenches or piling up stones as fortifications. They have further shown foresight in arranging for food and drink, as also discipline in setting aside marksmen to fire for them whilst reserving the fire of the whole body till a charge was made on their position. Their retreat when possible has always been orderly and undertaken at night.'

It says much for, and added something to, the prestige of the British officer, that Mr. Lang, when in charge of the Agency Police in 1925, received the surrender of an armed

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Miana gang when practically alone, with no escort and unarmed.

Soon after General Napier conquered Sind—in 1842—the Mianas proved most troublesome ravagers of the Thar, or desert, and it was chiefly to deal with them that the Irregular Cavalry Corps, which subsequently became the Thar and Parkar Police, was raised as we saw in a previous chapter.

So successful was the system of police established by Napier in Sind that the province was almost free from dacoity and robbery in the second half of the nineteenth century. For instance, not a single dacoity occurred in the whole province in the years 1874 and 1875. In the first two decades of the present century it was the proud boast of the Sind Police that 'they did not allow dacoity'. Cases occurred, of course, occasionally (ten or twenty annually): and once, when a Sessions Court acquitted a number of dacoits in Upper Sind, that part of the province broke out into a virulent epidemic of the crime. It was suppressed by energetic measures in a few months. When troop train after troop train passed through Sind in 1914, rumours spread that the British were leaving India and led to a small outbreak of dacoity, which, however, soon subsided as every case was detected, and all the chief offenders were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. One of the reasons for the success of the Sind Police in dealing with dacoity was the constant and very valuable assistance received from the landowning classes. Another was the wonderful work of the famous Sind trackers, who can track a man or an animal for an incredible number of miles—fifty or more in favourable circumstances—and identify a man as unerringly by his footprints as an ordinary person can by his face; and in precisely the same way, by being accustomed to taking in at a glance all the minute characteristics which connote individuality in a foot. The fine-grained, friable soil of the Indus valley is peculiarly adapted to receive clear impressions. To this circumstance is to be attributed the fact that the tracker's art has there reached such a high degree of perfection.

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Many are the stories of wonderful results obtained by the trackers of Sind. By the tombs of the Kelhoras, who were kings in Sind before the Talpurs—and the Talpurs were defeated by General Napier, and lost their kingdom at the Battle of Miani—there lives an old mujawar, a keeper of the tombs. He has a store of legends and will tell of the feats of great trackers in the far-distant days when the saintly Kelhoras ruled the land. Marvellous and even miraculous as some of these stories are, they are sometimes matched by the stirring deeds of the present day.

To overtake a gang of dacoits the trackers must be determined and very quick and efficient. On rare occasions they succeed in overtaking them, and then it becomes a matter of life and death.

On the 9th August 1926 a dozen dacoits raided the village of Kartal in the Sukkur District and left the village at about 10 p.m. with five thousand rupees' worth of loot. At 4 a.m. the news was brought to two mounted policemen at the village of Manro, where they had halted for the night in the course of a tour of duty. They at once set out for Kartal accompanied by some of the local zemindar's men. On the way they met the tracking party from Kartal hard on the heels of the dacoits, and were thus enabled to take up the pursuit. Unfortunately neither of the policemen was armed. They had left their carbines at the police station as the duty on which they were engaged was not likely to lead them into situations in which they would be required. The men who accompanied them and the trackers were equally unarmed. So after a few hours' tracking, when it appeared that the dacoits were not far ahead of them, the mounted Head Constable went to a village, belonging to a zemindar named Sayad Bahadurali Shah, to obtain further assistance and, if possible, a gun or two. Meanwhile the mounted constable (whose name was Sobdarkhan) was not the man to let the tracks grow cold and he pressed on with tireless energy and determination. The country was typical Sind jungle, very flat but with slight undulations and ravines. The banks of



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watercourses and, where it was not cultivated, thick bushes of camel-thorn and other desert shrubs served as cover. Still following the tracks, Sobdarkhan suddenly came upon the dacoits sitting down to divide the stolen property. Carrying nothing more deadly than a light cane, he rode up to them and bade them surrender. For answer a gun was fired at him, but missed. The dacoits called out that they would surrender the property but not themselves. They threw some of it on the ground before him. He refused to swerve from his duty by accepting such a compromise, and, pressing his horse among them, endeavoured to seize one of them. Then they attacked him with axes, brought down his horse and struck him on the head with furious blows. Some brave Baluchi peasants who had been tracking with him ran up at this juncture and engaged in a fierce combat with the dacoits. They killed one and injured two others so badly that they were unable to escape; but Sobdarkhan died. His stout courage and resolute pursuit were not in vain, for all the dacoits were caught soon afterwards. His British officers could not do less than advise the Government to grant a pension to his widow, and this was done.

Near the scene of this gallant action by a Sind policeman on the island of Bhukkur in the Indus opposite Sukkur stand the bastions of the old fort, where Niccolao Manucci, as he tells us in his *Storia di Mogor*, accompanied the ill-fated Prince Dara, heir to the throne of Shahjehan. Dara was then playing, with the dice loaded against him, for the highest imperial stakes against his younger brother Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb won and Dara's head, as was to be expected by those who lost in such a game, was laid at the other's feet. Aurangzeb, having slashed it thrice with a sword saying, 'Behold him who thought to be Emperor of Hindustan,' ordered it to be placed in a box and sent to his aged father, the Emperor, at Agra. When it was presented to Shahjehan at a feast, as Aurangzeb had ordered, he swooned and crying out, 'Khuda teri razi' ('God, thy will be done'), fell on his face among the golden goblets on his board.



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This happened in his old age to a man, the memory of whose love for a woman is enshrined for all time to come.

When she died he employed one of the greatest of Italian architects to build her a tomb of white marble and precious stones; and there it stands to this day, perfect, in a setting of dark trees by the banks of the Jumna.

Even the precincts of the Taj Mahal are not sacred to the dacoit. In a ruined mosque beside it in a grove, within sight of its ethereal loveliness, nine dacoits made rendezvous in the early hours of the morning of the 14th November 1925. They climbed to the roof, entered the dome by a small hole and lay down to sleep there. Since the previous evening Mr. McIntosh, the District Superintendent of Police of Agra, had been waiting for them with an inspector and a force of armed Police whom he had concealed near the Taj Mahal. When he learned that they had reached their rendezvous, he surrounded the mosque and searched it. Finding no signs of the dacoits in the lower rooms, he climbed, followed only by the Inspector, to the roof, the lower steps to which had disappeared. On the roof he discovered the small hole, masked by a tree, which led into the dome. After feeling about through this hole, in the dark, he found that the dacoits were in the dome asleep. Pushing aside the Inspector who tried to precede him, he crept through the hole. Then the Inspector squeezed himself through, and finding that the dacoits were lying with guns beside them, and that one of them was now awake, knocked him on the head. Mr. McIntosh and the Inspector stood guard over the nine men until a constable whom they called in disarmed them, relieving them of five loaded guns and other weapons.

These dacoits had come from the State of Dholpur and were known to the Police as a desperate gang. Agra lies in the United Provinces near the borders of Rajputana, and the interlacing of Indian States and British territory provides dacoits with many facilities for carrying on their operations, since the action of British and of State Police is necessarily circumscribed to some extent by the Extradition

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Treaties between the States and the Paramount Power. This is one of the reasons why it has proved difficult to stamp out dacoity in these provinces, in spite of the most cordial co-operation between the various Police Forces. How real and how close that co-operation can be is shown by the record of the Special Dacoity Police composed of men of the forces of the United Provinces and of Gwalior State in their combined operations.

On the 12th September 1929 they encountered the combined gangs of Doongar Sahai and Dalla and Balwanta Brahmins in the Nandpura ravines of the Gwalior State. The gangs escaped in these intricate ravines but had to abandon arms, transport and loot in their flight.

On the 5th April 1930 Doongar Sahai and Batohi with their gangs committed a dacoity in the Gwalior State. The Special Dacoity Police were informed, and after following the gang for nearly thirty-five miles overtook them. Only five men of the combined force were in sufficiently hot pursuit to make contact. The dacoits instantly opened fire on them on being warned by the villagers of the arrival of the Police. The small party, being greatly outnumbered, were unable to prevent their escape in the neighbouring ravines, in spite of the intrepidity and daring with which Constable Sharfuddin of the United Provinces Police led the attack.

On the 22nd May 1930 this same constable was killed in an encounter in which he displayed such gallantry as to receive the posthumous award of the King's Police Medal, an honour instituted by King Edward VII. Twenty-seven officers and men of the combined Gwalior and United Provinces Special Force set out to attack a gang, which was reported to have been seen in the ravines only four miles from their headquarters. They were proceeding in open formation through the ravines, when the right section in charge of Naik (Corporal) Kidar Singh of the United Provinces Police came into contact with the gang to the number of nearly thirty. The dacoits at once opened fire, and, though the Police were greatly outnumbered, Constable

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Sharfuddin, who was at the time in the open, took up a kneeling position and returned their fire. A dacoit, believed to be Doongar himself, under cover at a distance of thirty yards shot him through the chest and he expired almost at once. The fearless manner in which he exposed himself in his efforts to check the retreat of the gang encouraged the rest of the small party to remain in position until the main body could close on them; but unfortunately the dacoits were able to escape down a concealed ravine although hotly pursued. They left behind them Doongar's pony and four camels laden with the loot of two recent dacoities in Agra and Dholpur State, so that the honours were not all on their side.

Perhaps the most epic encounter in the annals of this force was that in which four constables engaged a large gang under the notorious Shama. One of the constables belonged to the Special Dacoity Police, two were in the armed Police of the Agra District and one belonged to the Gwalior State Military Police.

It was a pitch-dark night and there was no visibility. The constables knew that the gang was in the vicinity and, coming upon the sentries they had posted, seized them, but did not succeed in preventing them from raising the alarm. The rest of the gang at once rallied to their assistance. In the intense darkness no one could tell friend from foe, but the police party kept together through the night and maintained a regular fire on their assailants. Morning found them victorious, though one of their number had been killed. Shama and his lieutenant, Balwanta, were both dead, and their followers had disappeared. Five weapons, 300 rounds of ammunition and seven ponies remained on the scene as the spoils of war.

These are only a few isolated instances among many in a campaign against dacoity conducted by the Special Dacoity Police since it was formed in 1922, under an officer of the rank of District Superintendent of Police. The most important work of this force has been the investigation of a large

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number of gang cases; and it also assisted the District Police in dealing with the investigation and preparation of their cases, in the light of the expert knowledge of dacoity possessed by its officers.

Before the War there were normally some 500 or 600 cases of dacoity in the United Provinces annually. The conditions of the War period resulted in some increase in this type of crime almost everywhere in India. In 1918 the number in the United Provinces rose to 2,100 cases, and in 150 of these cases the dacoits committed murder. Several reasons were given for this serious epidemic. Among them, it was said, were a wave of unrest caused by high prices, uncertainty regarding the result of the War, a general impression among the lower orders (due to shortage of silver and increasing demands for men and money) that the Government was practically bankrupt, a widespread belief among the most turbulent sections of the community that the Government was so engrossed in war problems that the reins of control were loosened, and failure of the rains and a shortage of food grains.

In the following year the volume of this crime was nearer normal at 780 cases. In 1921 and 1922 it again rose, and in the latter year stood at 1,520. It was recognized that the task of dealing with large and well-organized gangs operating in several districts and in several of the Indian States on their borders was beyond the powers of the investigating officers in the police stations, overburdened as they always are with routine work. The Special Dacoity Police was accordingly formed for this duty, and it very quickly justified its formation by dealing with one of the best known of these gangs, the Bhanu gang, which was broken up, the notorious leader Sultana being hanged for murders committed in the course of his operations.

While gang cases had a very salutary effect, they involved immense labour, with which it was impossible for the District Police to cope. They frequently resulted in placing from 50 to 100 accused before the Court and in calling about

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400 witnesses. In May 1928, for instance, there were eight gang cases before the Courts and nine in preparation: and this state of affairs lasted almost continuously over a long period.

Under the leadership of Mr. Young, District Superintendent of Police, the Special Dacoity Police has carried on a long and successful campaign against dacoits in the United Provinces and the neighbouring States for some years.

One of their great achievements was the rounding up of the dreaded Chambal Kanjars, a clan of dacoits made up of five separate bands each under its own leader, who had long victimized the countryside. The task presented special difficulties, since the Kanjars operated in country much of which lay within the boundaries of a number of Indian States and was unfamiliar to the Special Police.

Mr. Young and his men began by methodically studying the terrain early in 1926. They also paid special attention to the important question of establishing friendly relations with the rulers of the States concerned and their Police Forces. They made a detailed study of the 'haunts, habits and movements' of the Kanjars, and, in short, developed all the preliminary staff work for the campaign.

During the summer rains of 1926 and the ensuing winter, various attempts to capture the gangs failed—one big raid on account of the difficulties of transport, another through the treachery of the guides. Yet another failed, after a long and arduous march and a skilful approach, through the accidental discharge of a rifle, which enabled the dacoits to escape as they were on the point of being surrounded. In March 1927 some of the individual leaders were arrested on the railway and news came in that the main body were hidden on the banks of the Chambal river. A raid was organized in conjunction with the Gwalior State Police. After difficult marching, dangerous fording of the river and a brisk engagement in its bed, a number of the gang were captured with considerable booty.

Altogether eight raids on a large scale were conducted

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against the Kanjars in the States of Dholpur, Bharatpur, Jaipur and Gwalior with the full co-operation of the Durbars of those States, who most gracefully acknowledged the efforts of Mr. Young and his force. In one of these Mr. Young made use of a Verey light as a signal for the advance in the dark. This entirely strange and unknown apparition so terrified the dacoits that they fled in confusion and hid themselves in a neighbouring village. Next morning the terrors of the countryside were dragged out of all sorts of undignified hiding-places, the fiercest desperadoes being found crouching among the household goods and corn bins of the villagers. Finally 150 Kanjars were prosecuted in a gang case.

While the Special Police were engaged in this and several other campaigns, the District Police were continuously occupied in their own independent operations against dacoits. The number of dacoities gradually diminished until in 1928 it was back to 600. The reports of the Inspector-General of the United Provinces Police chronicle, year after year, a long series of cases, in many of which the Police did fine work and displayed wonderful courage. It is not to be supposed that in a long period in conditions approaching those of active service their shield was invariably bright. In a few cases men were punished for cowardice even as cases of cowardice occur in the finest armies in the world. These were so few as to throw into relief the high standard generally maintained. Cases of remarkable courage by villagers are also frequently mentioned. It is reported, for instance, that thanks to great gallantry on the part of one Sankata Brahmin, a villager, a dacoit was arrested after a stiff fight, and that this led to a dangerous gang's being broken up, while the hero of the affair was given a sword and a sum of money at a parade held by the Inspector-General of Police. As the Police gradually got the upper hand of the dacoits, instances of successful resistance by villagers increased, and in the last few years there have been many instances of their capturing dacoits, even after suffering severe casualties.



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Among a large variety of instances the following have been picked out at random to illustrate the general state of affairs:

In 1918 a party of British soldiers out on a shooting expedition came upon a party of dacoits dividing their spoil. An exchange of shots followed, which resulted in one of the dacoits being wounded and captured. He made a statement which led to the arrest of the whole gang.

In 1922 a sub-inspector with twenty armed Police attacked fifty dacoits belonging to the Bhantu gang who were returning from Pilibhit after committing several dacoities. The dacoits, following the usual practice of the Bhantus, were encamped close to thick cover with a clear line of retreat, which enabled them to vanish into the forest leaving ten ponies, two guns and a revolver, several pounds of gunpowder and three cartloads of property, the proceeds of recent dacoities.

Three sub-inspectors and two head constables received the King's Police Medal for the operations against the Bhantu gang which culminated in the execution of the leader Sultana. All were present at a series of desperate encounters. Head Constable Gauhar Singh distinguished himself, not only by bravery in the heat of action, but also by taking his life in his hands when he volunteered to accompany the District Superintendent, Mr. Young, on a mission involving very delicate negotiations in a portion of the jungle which was exclusively in the possession of the Bhantu gang. One of the constables of the Special Dacoity Force, named Mahomed Haider, made himself conspicuous by taking a leading part in the attacks on the gang on more than one occasion, and once, in particular, by using his remarkable speed as a runner to outstrip the rest of his comrades, and tackle eleven armed Bhantus single-handed. He shot one of them and the rest took refuge in a patch of high sugar-cane where they were arrested when the main body of the Police came up.

Again in 1922 Mr. Adams, the District Superintendent of



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Police at Agra, came upon a gang in the act of committing a dacoity. He led an attack in which they were driven off, and then pursued them in his car and succeeded after a short fight in arresting three of them.

At about the same time a constable in Agra cleverly arrested two dacoits with a Mills bomb.

In the Etah District Mr. Rivett Carnac, the District Superintendent, hearing the uproar occasioned by a dacoity near his camp one night, went to the place in his sleeping-suit and attacked the dacoits single-handed. They wounded him in the shoulder, but his Reader, Sub-Inspector Nazir-ul-Hassan, and one of his orderlies came to his assistance and the gang made off. He pressed the pursuit and captured one of them with a loaded gun, while his orderly captured another.

In Jalauni, Mr. Bhalla, an Indian officer in the Imperial Service, ambushed a party of dacoits and exposed himself under fire in order to kill a dacoit who was creeping up behind a wall to fire point-blank at some constables in an unprotected position.

Sub-Inspector Mahmud-ul-Hassan, learning that one Mehtab Singh, who was noted for the cruelty he practised while committing dacoity, was hiding in a certain house, collected four constables, posted them round the house and himself burst into the place. He found Mehtab Singh lying on a bed with a gun beside him. Mehtab Singh endeavoured to seize the gun and shoot the Sub-Inspector, but the officer fell on him and secured him.

Inspector Mohiuddin made a plucky arrest of a notorious dacoit who was armed with a Winchester repeater.

Sub-Inspector Dawindar Singh surrounded a place, where a dacoit named Surain Singh was reported to be hiding, with a party of mounted men. Surain Singh fired at the Sub-Inspector from inside a big bush. The officer flung himself from his horse and sprang into the bush, where he had a desperate struggle with the dacoit, who, like himself, was an exceptionally powerful man, until assistance arrived and the man was overpowered.

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There is an apparently endless succession of such tales, and it cannot but cause surprise that this form of crime is not more effectually checked by so much courage, so much labour and such elaborate organization.

One possible explanation is that during recent years only one case out of three, sometimes only one out of five, has ended in conviction, while of the dacoits prosecuted only one in two, and sometimes less, have been sent to jail. This question of the comparative immunity of criminals is at the root of most police problems, but it raises large issues which cannot be discussed here.

It may seem incredible that a dacoity could be perpetrated in a City like Bombay standing on an island some ten miles long and having only two exits both lying close together at the northern end. Perhaps once in two years a bania's shop in some isolated part of the suburbs is attacked in typical dacoity fashion; but in such cases the dacoits do not venture to stay long, since by means of telephones and motor transport the City Police can despatch 50 or 100 armed Police to any point in the island at a few minutes' notice.

Dacoity presents a most formidable problem to the Indian Police. We have seen how whole districts are terrorized, and how the dacoits sometimes slip away and conceal themselves as ordinary people, and at others remain as gangs 'in being' to encounter the Police in their jungle fastnesses.

There are three main difficulties in bringing dacoits to book. The first is the wide areas over which the gangs can operate and the nature of the terrain. The second is the difficulty in obtaining information. This is largely due to deliberate terrorism. The records are full of stories of the horrible fate of suspected informants at the hands of desperate men: of village watchmen and others bound hand and foot and thrown into rivers, or slowly roasted alive, or hideously mutilated. (In the face of such things the conduct of villagers who bravely encounter dacoits is all the more worthy of admiration.) This also in part explains the third difficulty, that of producing evidence sufficient to satisfy the Courts and,

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by securing convictions, break up the gangs and keep these dangerous and troublesome pests under restraint.

This is not the whole of the difficulty. We have seen how in the time of Warren Hastings and in our own days there have been reasons for believing that the elaborate laws of evidence and the strict legal procedure of our Courts render it difficult to bring offenders to justice and to keep crime under control.

The contrast, for example, between Sind and the United Provinces in the matter of dacoity is illuminating. Both provinces have equally dangerous and desperate criminals. There are three times as many murders—crimes arising out of passion—in Sind per million of the population; but, on the same basis, five or six times as many dacoities in the United Provinces at the worst and more than twice as many at the best. In reality, the contrast is greater than the mere figures suggest, because few of the Sind dacoities are serious affairs. The Sind Police have never let the situation pass beyond their control for more than a few weeks, because they have always been able to secure the conviction of dacoits.

Everywhere in India abnormal conditions, such as political unrest or a fall in agricultural prices or a rise in the cost of living, create a situation favourable to an outbreak of dacoity. Then, unless the Police can promptly lodge the offenders in jail, the problem easily and rapidly assumes overwhelming dimensions, and the situation can only be restored by great exertions and special measures.

Cattle theft occurs all over India, but, as has already been mentioned, it is specially prevalent and presents peculiar features in the North. The most obvious of those features is that the owner knows that there are men who act as brokers in stolen cattle and that by paying them a fee he is practically certain to recover the animals, which there is little hope of doing in any other way. The terrain is a difficult one, affording as it does plenty of scope for concealing stolen animals of all descriptions. There are great areas of forest

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and jungle. There are miles of country which are covered by rivers like the Indus for several months in the year, and, at the end of each inundation season, present an entirely new appearance. Landmarks have been washed away, and new channels have been opened by the waters. Tamarisk and elephant grass grow rapidly to the height of ten feet or more, and the whole landscape is constantly changing. People live in these jungles tending their cattle and without practising agriculture. They are free to move from place to place. Fields generally are not fenced or hedged, and cattle are always straying.

Thieves sometimes pick up stray cattle and sometimes steal them from their pens at night. The owners follow their tracks, which, of course, show at a glance whether an animal has been led away or not. The tracks are often lost after a few miles, because there are always patches of hard ground which do not show the track so clearly, and between the thief and the pursuit the tracks have always been crossed and partly obliterated by the tracks of other animals in many places. Nevertheless, the owner usually knows that when the tracks are lost in a certain area, there is a certain *thangdar* (or *patharidar* in Sindhi), or broker, whom he should approach in the matter. This broker is himself a receiver of stolen cattle, and the animals in question may have actually been brought to him for disposal by the thief, or the thief may be one of his gang. If they are not with him, he may be able to open up negotiations with the *patharidar* who has them. When acting in this capacity he is known as a *katku* in Sind, or as an *agu* farther east. He levies a heavy fee for the return of stolen animals, and the name given to this fee all over Northern India is *bhunga*.

Horses, buffaloes, bullocks and cows, camels, and even goats are the objectives of the cattle thief. Animals are frequently stolen singly, or in twos and threes. Buffaloes are stolen in herds during the inundation season. Just as the riverain patrols watch likely places for buffaloes on the river, other patrols sometimes watch likely places near the

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jungles inhabited by known patharidars. Although they sometimes make a capture, the work is rather like the proverbial search for a needle in hay, and the Police Force is not large enough for men to be spared for such duties regularly. Even when a case of cattle theft has been reported to the Police, it is almost impossible for them to recover the animals, and the owner often does so himself by means of paying bhunga.

One measure adopted to check the depredations of cattle thieves has been the free use of the preventive sections of the Code of Criminal Procedure, but it soon became apparent to the district officers that this method was open to abuse. Powerful landowners or unscrupulous sub-inspectors could scrape together sufficient evidence to prosecute people under these sections in order to wreak private vengeance or to satisfy a grudge. To meet this difficulty, and to ensure that only the most inveterate thieves were brought under these sections, it was long the practice in some districts for sub-inspectors to obtain sanction from higher authorities before taking action of this kind. It was also customary for Circle Inspectors, Subdivisional Police Officers, and Subdivisional Magistrates to take all possible steps to keep themselves informed as to the thieves who were most notoriously troubling their jurisdictions as a check on the work of the subordinate Police. Many prosecutions were instituted over a wide area and over a long period without any very tangible results. Cattle theft continued to flourish.

On one occasion an Assistant Superintendent of Police, who was anxiously endeavouring to remedy a state of affairs which was obviously causing great hardship to thousands of poor farmers, made very lengthy and detailed inquiries into the whole subject and a number of experiments. He located the pens of a number of notorious cattle thieves in remote hiding-places in the jungles, and made midnight raids on them with a dozen mounted Police. He arranged for large areas to be patrolled and considerable numbers of suspect cattle were attached and their descriptions

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circulated all over the countryside. Hundreds of unfortunate owners came to see if theirs were among the animals recovered.

He made extensive inquiries from big landowners, from numerous police officers, from villagers and farmers as to the most notorious thieves, and he found that their numbers were uncomfortably large.

On one occasion he consulted Khan Sahib Imambuksh Khan, Honorary Special Magistrate and the zemindar of half a dozen villages. The Khan Sahib said that certain Khosa Baluchis were the worst thieves he knew. As four of them had previous convictions for cattle theft, having been caught with buffaloes on the river on more than one occasion, the Assistant ordered the Sub-Inspector to place them before the Court under the preventive sections, since a number of people had independently testified to their bad livelihood. Warrants were issued and two of the four were arrested. The other two were reported to have absconded.

Four months passed and the Sub-Inspector reported that the men could not be traced; that he had asked the Khan Sahib to assist by instructing his factors to arrange to find where they were hiding. He hinted that they were on the Khan Sahib's lands. The Assistant pressed the Khan Sahib to find out where they were, since they were known to his people, and were residents of the jungles belonging to his estate. The Khan Sahib promised to have careful inquiries made among his tenants and graziers, but said that he believed the men had gone to live in another district. A few weeks later the Assistant again came to visit that part of the country on his tour, and the Khan Sahib asked him to come and shoot some of his partridges. The Khan Sahib was an excellent shot and they had very good sport. Walking back across the fields the Assistant was talking to some of the beaters, when the subject turned to cattle theft. The Assistant asked if they knew anything about the two Khosas. The beaters grinned and said that they were thorough scoundrels. A local farmer who was walking with them



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remarked that two of the Khan Sahib's buffaloes had disappeared two months previously but that the Khan Sahib had sent for these two men and threatened to give them up to the Police unless they recovered them for him. They had searched all over the riverain jungles for them, and eventually found them with their heads locked together by the horns, showing that they had been fighting and had got their horns so firmly locked that they had eventually died of starvation in the jungle.

When he was alone with the Khan Sahib the Assistant asked him about this story, and he admitted its truth in an unguarded moment. The Assistant then pointed out that at this time he was supposed to be on the lookout to arrest these two men, and that it was clear that he had used the fact that there were warrants out against them to obtain a hold over them, while protecting them from arrest by the Police. He also pointed out that the case against them had originally been instituted at his suggestion. He pointedly remarked that the only way to avoid disgrace over the matter now was to secure the arrest of the men without delay. The Khan Sahib made an attempt to deny these impeachments, but the Assistant repeated that unless the men were arrested within the next few days, the Khan Sahib must expect unpleasant consequences to follow from conduct so inappropriate to a magistrate. Within a week the Khan Sahib's factors had produced the two men before the Sub-Inspector.

The main point of this story is to show that the conditions are such that even the most powerful zemindars find it necessary to have a thief of the standing of a patharidar or broker under their influence in order to protect their own cattle. The protection thus afforded by the zemindars gives such men a very strong position and enables them to prey on less powerful people. Unless this vicious circle can be broken, it is difficult to see how cattle theft can ever be checked in Northern India. It is a social rather than a strictly criminal problem, which exists generally in tracts



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where certain forms of land tenure and social organization are in force.

Many expedients have been tried so far without any marked success. Branding and tattooing the ears of cattle are popular among the people, but have not yet been employed on a sufficiently wide and systematic scale to ensure success. Special officers have been appointed to deal with the question in the Punjab and the United Provinces. A Committee of Inquiry has been appointed in Sind. Numerous conferences have been arranged between representatives of different States and Provinces. The vicious circle has not yet been broken.

There are various factors which add to the intricacy of the problem. One is that cattle theft, so far from being regarded as involving moral turpitude, has long been treated among large sections of the rural population as a sport in which a man of spirit may be expected to indulge. A successful career as a cattle thief compels a certain amount of admiration, even though the havoc wrought provokes resentment and private persons will occasionally arrest suspected thieves with stolen cattle. Complications not infrequently arise through big landowners having among their relatives men who lead profligate and perhaps violent lives; or sometimes through their taking mistresses from the lower classes who influence them to protect fathers or brothers who have a penchant for the sport of driving buffaloes down the river.

Apart from patharidars who thrive under protection in high places there are, here and there, communities, like the people of Sobraon mentioned in a previous chapter, who attain notoriety for criminal ways. Such communities indulge in cattle theft among other things, and by their generally turbulent attitude overawe their neighbours. In Sind an attempt has been made to deal with some communities of this kind by restricting their freedom of movement under the Criminal Tribes Act. This was done in the case of the Jagirani of Dubar, a tribe of modern Ishmaels, the

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*fons et origo* of their troubles being lack of land: but when an opportunity to settle on new land presented itself at the time that the Nasrat canal was 'colonized', they did not take it. Perhaps they were too wedded to the hazards of a life of adventure.

The crime of female infanticide is now believed to have been reduced to insignificant proportions chiefly as a result of the influence of Reform Societies and of changes in the economic conditions of different classes. The subject was dealt with at length in the Punjab Census Report of 1911 by Pandit Hari Kishen Kaul. It is stated that the practice of destroying female infants at birth undoubtedly existed at the time of the annexation of the Punjab. When the great John Lawrence became Commissioner of the Trans-Sutlej States, he issued his famous commandments:

'Bewa mat jalao; beti mat maro; korhi mat dabao'; or, 'Thou shalt not burn thy widow; thou shalt not kill thy daughter; thou shalt not bury thy leper alive.'

The new law, according to the quotation in the Census Report from his *Life*, was strictly enforced from 1847. He deprecated any strict system of supervision by the Police as being impotent for all good, and liable to be used as an engine of extortion and oppression. He believed that a remedy was to be found by persuading the influential members of the community to set their faces against the practice.

The root of the custom has always been recognized to be excessive expenditure on weddings which made the arrival of a daughter unwelcome.

A proclamation was therefore issued by Lawrence denouncing female infanticide, and a great Durbar was held at Amritsar, attended by Ruling Chiefs and Sardars, at which agreements were entered into by representatives of various tribes in different parts of the country to restrict expenditure on weddings within certain limits.

There was always considerable uncertainty as to the extent of the practice, and as to the communities among

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whom it was to be found. It was, in any case, limited to small sections in certain parts of Northern India. As was natural, the mothers sometimes made great efforts to save their daughters.

Towards the end of last century it was believed that it was prevalent in certain Jat villages where the number of men exceeded that of women by nearly two to one. Action of an experimental nature was taken by applying a law under which all births, marriages and deaths had to be registered by the Police; and marriage expenses were rigorously curtailed. It is doubtful whether this action was really effective. Where improvement has occurred and the proportion of women has increased, it is to be attributed to the effect of reformatory and economic influences rather than to legislative action.

Russell Stracey, discussing the practice among the Muhiyals, whom he calls militant Brahmins, mentions the case of Munshi Bakshi Ramdas, Chibbar, who stated that when he was eight years old he was called by a servant to his mother's bedside. A midwife then placed his newly born sister in his arms and killed her by pouring icy-cold water on her head. This incident impressed itself so indelibly on his mind that in after-life it suggested the many reforms he had been instrumental in initiating.

The shortage of women which still exists in parts of the Punjab and Sind is explained as being attributable to causes other than female infanticide. It leads to another social aberration, which may in certain cases lead to crime, that is to a bride price for women. The payment of either a bridegroom price or a bride price is considered objectionable among the better classes in the Punjab, but owing to the scarcity of women the latter is now not uncommon among the lower classes. This is one of the factors favouring a decrease of infanticide but it also opens the door to offences such as kidnapping and the selling of women as brides. The woman is very often a willing party to the transaction, and if all goes well in her new home nothing further is heard of

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the matter. If she is unwilling or does not feel happy in the bridegroom's house, or if the bridegroom discovers that she is of a lower caste than she was represented to be, the matter is likely to come before the Police for investigation. In such cases it is often very difficult to arrive at the truth, since all the parties are likely to indulge in prevarication on material points.

Women come in this way as brides to the Punjab from the United Provinces, and to Sind from Cutch, Rajputana and Gujerat. There have been cases of Arab women being brought into Sind from the Persian Gulf. The difficulty of dealing with these affairs is further enhanced by the fact that the brokers, through whom the bridegroom or his family purchase the bride, are sometimes under suspicion of selling women for prostitution.

The abolition of suttee, or sati, which was effected under the influence of the British Government more than a century ago, has produced certain complications in Hindu society owing to the prejudice on religious grounds against the re-marriage of widows. Isolated cases of sati still occur. Recent police reports mention that in some cases the abettors of the suicide have been brought to justice, and that in one or two cases no action was taken by any local authority, and the sites of the sati became sacred and objects of pilgrimage. Religious institutions are slow a-dying, and even when they are discarded by the great majority of the people, as in this matter of sati, they are still apt to linger on in the hearts of a few, who are regarded as superstition-ridden by their more enlightened fellows.

Superstitious ideas and practices are still prevalent among the primitive races and the lower classes of India, and are sometimes responsible for crimes connected with witch-hunting and the like. The case of the sepoy of the 7th Native Infantry, who, many years ago, caused his own head to be cut off, has long been forgotten, but it attracted some attention at the time. He suffered from acute headaches, and he declared that a goddess had appeared to him and

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informed him that the head would rejoin the trunk after two hours and that he would never suffer from headache again. If the man was temporarily insane, the same cannot be said of his friend and his relations who, after decapitating him, waited for the prescribed two hours and then rushed out in a panic to inform their neighbours of the disaster.

Among other extraordinary practices which go back to primitive times is the murder of parents and old people. There are traces of this among the ancient Romans. The expression *sexagenarii depontani* refers to the practice, probably common among some of the tribes before they settled on Roman soil, of throwing persons of sixty years of age off a bridge. It may be suggested that it was necessary to do this among people who, like the wandering Celts and Teutons when they first come into Roman history, had to be always on the march and always ready to fight. There are traces of the same practice in South Germany, where in places there was a survival in the Middle Ages. It took the form of throwing straw men over the bridge into the river, while a verse was recited, the refrain running, 'Hinunter, hinunter, die Welt ist dir gram,' or words to that effect. The rare cases of the murder of parents and old people past the age of usefulness or any capacity for enjoyment which are reported to occur in Northern India may be traced to folk-memory. Whatever the truth of the Aryan question may be, there are undoubtedly large Scythian elements in the population of Northern India and traditions of this kind may be attributed to that source.

Other primitive ideas still lingering among the remnants of primitive races in India are those which inspire such acts as the ritual murder of children and human sacrifice. They are now extremely rare, and only occur as isolated instances. The basic idea in both cases is to secure the fertility of the persons performing the sacrifice—or, according to modern

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law, committing the murder—or their animals or crops. S. M. Edwardes in his *Crime in India* mentions three cases of women murdering children in the Punjab in 1921 in the hope that the child would be reborn in their own wombs. He recalls similar stories from fifteenth-century France.

Human sacrifice, as is well known from *The Golden Bough*, was common in the past in most parts of the world. S. M. Edwardes mentions two cases in 1920, one in Bihar and the other in Madras, and a case in Madras in which a petition for permission to perform a human sacrifice was made to a magistrate in the Madras Presidency in 1902. The object in this last case was said to be to give a rich colour to the turmeric crop.

It is traditionally believed that human sacrifices were usual in the past when a fort or a bridge was built, and there are legends to the effect that young people were buried alive in some of the old forts which still stand all over the country. Rumours are sometimes heard to the effect that a sacrifice is necessary when a new bridge is built by the Railways or the Public Works Department. There do not appear to be any authenticated cases of the kind in recent times. On the contrary, when an accident occurs in connexion with the construction of an important building, it is said to give the superstitious occasion to remark that the accident is due to the failure to observe the ancient ritual.

A few cases of human sacrifice to the goddess Bhawani or to Kali have been reported in the last decade. Kali is the grim goddess of destruction, represented as many-handed and always desirous of blood.

In the eastern Punjab there is one of the queerest aberrations extant in the human race. There is an inexplicable and degraded sect of people who dig corpses out of their graves to devour the flesh. Soon after the beginning of the War the people of Karachi were horrified by two of them who desecrated a Mahomedan grave for this purpose, and



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the prosecution which resulted would doubtless have attracted more attention from the Press of the world, but for the preoccupations of that time. The sect is not believed to number more than a few score people, but its members for obvious reasons maintain the greatest secrecy. Nothing is known as to its origins; but it may be connected with the Mahomedan legend of the Giaour which reached Europe during the Crusades. The legend was to the effect that such a sect existed in some region of the East, but it is generally regarded as an exaggeration. It is supposed that it arose from the fact that the Zoroastrians in Persia dug up Mahomedan graves because they regarded burial as defiling the pure element, earth. The people of Baluchistan still retain memories of these legends in attributing megalithic monuments in the hills to the 'Gabar', by which name they refer to the Zoroastrians who were driven out of that country by the Arab invasions of the eighth century. It is possible that, if the sect of corpse-eaters was then in existence, it may have been confused with the 'Gabar' or Giaour.

In all these forms of crime peculiar to India the Indian Police have a unique series of problems. Thagi and sati, dacoity, cattle theft, female infanticide, crimes connected with the custom of bride price, the murder of parents and old people, human sacrifices or crimes due to superstition are all matters into which enter complex human relationships and reactions of a very varied nature. Crimes due to religious animosities—such as defiling a temple or a mosque, injuring the religious feelings of another by a parade of slaughtered kine or by playing music before a mosque at the time of prayer—and the prevalence of rioting are matters of far-reaching social and political importance.

All these forms of crime represent phases in the development of mankind, which in some cases have not occurred and in others have become extinct or nearly so in England. Thus the investigating officer in India is concerned with an extraordinary variety of emotions, reactions and motives in



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a series of problems of great ethnological interest and practical importance.

A mere catalogue of crime such as this gives a very one-sided view of life. It illustrates the work of the Police Force, but it only deals with one of the many aspects of the life of the people. By concentrating and collecting matters connected with crime in one chapter or in one volume we inevitably lose a sense of perspective. Even to view the work of the Police Force in correct perspective it is necessary to bear in mind that it has many aspects and to remember the reservations—such as that while crimes like dacoity and cattle theft are very widespread and general in some parts, they are far less so in others; and that the rest of these special forms of crime are of rare, even very rare, occurrence, while rioting only became common in the last two decades.

It is said that doctors, policemen and lawyers tend to become cynical through being occupied in dealing with the seamy sides of life and with human nature at its weakest. There may be truth in this: but the Indian policeman of all ranks sees much to counteract this tendency. He lives generally in natural conditions, among the forests, the rivers, the hills and the rich harvests of the earth. He takes a pride in his training and in the technique of his profession. He has before him the example set by his officers and his fellows in devotion to duty and contempt of danger and hardship; the self-respect and efficiency of the trained men of the fighting races; and the natural pride of rank and birth among the aristocracies of India. Even the investigation of the worst crimes often shows him the best in human nature, the quiet courage of humble men and women with a clear-eyed vision of the realities of life.

## CHAPTER X

### PRIMITIVE HUNTERS AND CRIMINAL TRIBES

**T**HERE ARE many remnants of primitive hunting peoples and forest tribes in India. Some of them still subsist by means of hunting and fishing, but in recent years they have tended to become absorbed in agriculture and industry, and in many cases the numbers engaged in primitive pursuits are diminishing.

Many, but not all, of these peoples have taken to different forms of crime—theft, burglary, highway robbery or dacoity. Where they are habitually addicted to such pursuits they have earned the title of ‘Criminal Tribes’. Some of the classes or groups officially known as Criminal Tribes have other origins, being merely associations of thieves. A few landless graziers, such as certain Baluchis in the Punjab, having degenerated and taken to theft as a means of subsistence, not individually but as a tribal group, are also treated as members of a Criminal Tribe.

Among the original hunting tribes which have taken to organized and habitual crime one of the most remarkable is that of the Bauriahs. They have developed great skill and cunning and a special technique. They disguise themselves as wandering ascetics, of whom many thousands are always wandering over the hills and plains of India, visiting the holy places and the sacred rivers.

To the ordinary peasant or trader the speculations of transcendental philosophy are as incomprehensible as they are to the man in the street in other countries, but he pays due reverence to holy men without undue curiosity as to the infinite variety of sect and doctrine.

Three Sadhus or ascetics were walking along the dusty

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white road which leads from Dawlatpur to Deparja. They wore brick-coloured robes, and their arms and foreheads were heavily smeared with pale yellow markings. One carried a staff, a begging bowl and a skin of the black antelope—the black antelope, the bounds of whose natural roamings mark those of Arya-varta, the land of the Aryans. One had a book wrapped in cloth to protect it, and one had an iron implement shaped like a pair of tongs. Being tired they sat down to rest in the shade of a tree, a little way from the road.

A young Hindu was planting onions in a field near by, and he came to them and asked if they required lodging in the village. They replied that their lodging was the open sky. One of them commenced to recite some verses from the sacred books, and the youth sat, gaping, to listen to the holy words.

After some time, as the sonorous verses rolled from his tongue, a party of men were seen coming along the road by which the Sadhus had come. They were five in number, all tall, bearded men. Three of them were wearing long flowing trousers, a dirty white or dark blue, and short dark coats, a cotton print scarf and a pagri of a similar description tied round their long locks. The other two wore the undress uniform of the Sind Police and were mounted on small but sturdy ponies. Carbines rested in buckets attached to their saddles and swords hung from their Sam Browne belts. As they came along, the man on foot who led the party occasionally made a hurried mark on the ground with a five-foot staff, thus showing that he was a tracker following the tracks of men or animals plainly discernible in the dust of the open road.

He turned aside at the point opposite the tree where the Sadhus were sitting, and the others halted in the road. One of the policemen dismounted, and as he did so a surprising thing happened. Three ascetics got up and ran in different directions.

The tracking party were not slow to realize that Sadhus

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who run from the Police are not quite what they appear to be. They soon caught them; and the trackers were satisfied, as soon as they saw their footprints, that they were the three men whose tracks they had followed since the early morning from the scene of a burglary, fifteen miles away at Dawlatpur. Witnesses were called by the Police from the neighbouring fields, and in their presence the persons of the 'Sadhus' were searched as well as the place where they had been sitting. Nothing was found, but one of the policemen observed that one of them had an iron spoon concealed on his person, not quite like any implement usually carried by wandering ascetics. It had a sharp point which he thought looked as if it might have made the marks which he had noticed in the mud wall where a hole had been made by the burglars. This was afterwards verified, and proved sufficient to obtain a remand for the purpose of enabling the Police to make further inquiries.

The finger-prints proved that the three 'Sadhus' were in reality members of that well-known criminal tribe, the Dehliwala Bauriahs, in disguise, and that they had previous convictions for burglary in their own province 800 miles away.

This incident led to further inquiries into the antecedents of wandering mendicants in various guises, with the result that in the course of one year over a hundred members of criminal tribes from the Punjab and the United Provinces were traced in Sind. In several cases Hindu villagers protested against the police action in arresting men whom they considered to be Sadhus, but in every case some, at least, of each party arrested had previous convictions.

In 1928 the Criminal Investigation Department in Sind searched a camp of wandering mendicants in the Nawabshah District in Sind, and recovered a large quantity of jewellery of a description not used in that province, but common several hundred miles away in the neighbourhood of Bombay and Poona. After protracted inquiries evidence was obtained implicating twenty-three of these Bauriahs in forty-four

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different cases in widely separated parts of the Bombay Presidency. The inquiry showed that they were in the habit of starting out from the base which they had established in Nawabshah, after leaving their own country near Delhi some years previously, to make periodical expeditions for the purpose of committing burglary. They covered the whole of the Bombay Presidency, as well as parts of Rajputana and Madras. They usually disguised themselves as Sadhus and stayed in temples and in Dharmshalas erected by the pious for the accommodation of travellers. They worked in gangs of about ten, and moving about in the villages singly or in pairs on the pretence of begging, marked down houses where the women were wearing gold ornaments. After a house had been marked down, they would wait somewhere in the neighbourhood until the moonless nights came round. They would then break into it and remove jewellery from the persons of the women, using violence if necessary. On two occasions they had committed murder in the course of getting away with the property.

As a rule, they buried the stolen jewellery for a couple of days near the place where they were encamped, and then melted it into gold and silver ingots. Sometimes they sent it as a railway parcel to a station in Sind, where it would be received by a member of the gang. After despatching the parcel, the gang would break up and return to the base in Nawabshah by different routes.

They celebrated their return by a feast; and divided the property among all the members of the gang, a share being set aside for their god and another for their headman.

Except for the change of base from near Delhi to Nawabshah, the Bauriahs are proved by the results of this inquiry to have continued to follow the tactics attributed to them in 1907 in the handbook on the Criminal Tribes produced by Mr. Kennedy, then Deputy Inspector-General of Police in the Criminal Investigation Department at Poona.

The number of Bauriahs in the Punjab and the United Provinces is probably in the neighbourhood of 40,000. Many

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of them have been engaged in agriculture for generations. Some thousands of them have adopted the Sikh religion. Others remained nomadic in their habits and adhered to their primitive ways of living by hunting and fowling. They seem to belong to the same primitive stock—doubtless much mixed with others in the last few thousand years—as the Sansis, Bhandus, Kanjars, Haburas, and Karwal Nats.

All these are remnants of aboriginal hunting tribes, which have survived since the days before the plains of India were occupied, thousands of years ago, by the Dravidians and later by the Aryan invaders. As a result of the pressure of population and other influences, some of them settled down and were assimilated to the agricultural tribes among whom they lived. Those who kept to the ancestral pursuits of hunting found that these did not provide them with a sufficient means of livelihood. It was an easy step to develop the team-work necessary to hunt small game into that which distinguishes the Bauriah gangs on burglary expeditions. Burglary is a more profitable form of hunting.

On a hunting expedition an experienced or able man naturally takes the lead and directs operations. Game has to be located. When it has been marked down, it must be adroitly driven into nets, or surrounded and knocked on the head. The whole party must work in unison and they must all know what part each is to play. Signals are used and whistling noises which will not disturb or stampede the game.

The criminal tribes very often use similar methods, though of a more highly developed technique, in committing burglary or dacoity. They display the same instincts in both.

The Bauriah gangs call their leader a *kamaoo*. He or a clever member of the gang reconnoitres in a likely town or village, and they are said to have developed a sixth sense which enables them to estimate with extraordinary success whether a house is worth a nocturnal visit.

Having marked down a likely house the gang moves on. When the dark nights come round, they go back on their tracks to the most promising of the various quarries thus

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marked down. The house is usually built of mud bricks with a wooden door. If so, a hole is quietly made beside the door frame to enable a hand to be inserted to lift the latch from inside. If the door is locked, a hole will be made in the wall big enough for the leader to pass through. This hole is covered by one of the gang with a cloth to prevent a draught of air from disturbing the sleepers and to prevent anyone who may chance to wake from seeing a light outside and so realizing that the hole has been made. An alternative is to enter through a barred window, the bars being quietly and forcibly bent and drawn out of their sockets.

Then the leader enters and lights a taper which he carries. He takes careful stock of the exact position of the inmates and the things in the room. He extinguishes the light, and after satisfying himself that all the sleepers are in deep enough slumber, proceeds to hand out valuables to the gang outside. Some of them are ready to take what he hands out, while others are on the lookout for interruption from outside.

If they are disturbed, the warning signal is a close imitation of the noise made by a hare when caught.

In order not to attract too much attention, Bauriahs consider that two gangs should not work in the same country. As gangs are frequently away from home for several months, it would be easy for two gangs to stumble on one another. If the appearance of the first gang as coinciding with a number of burglaries had attracted the attention of the Police, the arrival of a second and similar band of Sadhus would be likely to lead to unpleasant interference with their work. To prevent this, a Bauriah gang makes large marks on prominent walls as it passes through the country, so that any other gang chancing to come over the same ground may take a different direction. The marks show the strength of the gang and the direction which it is taking.

The Bauriah ranges over the whole of India, and this is one of the specialities of his technique. Another is the art of eluding sentries in order to break into tents. He used to take a great pride in this as being his peculiar hereditary form of



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crime in the days when tents worth entering were more common than they are now. Yet another speciality is the disguise of a Sadhu, which requires some skill and care. There are many peculiarities of a Sadhu's equipment which have to be exactly imitated. There are special marks on the forehead, and special paraphernalia such as the tongs and begging bowl. There are brands which betoken to the initiated that they have been made, on the arm, on the occasion of a pilgrimage to a great shrine like that at Dwarka. There is the necessity for an acquaintance with some of the religious books. All these things the Bauriah has mastered. So adept is he that the ordinary man is invariably, or almost invariably, deceived, and even Sadhus do not penetrate the disguise. Sometimes, however, he gives himself away by an incorrect mark on his forehead, or by a mistake made in the knot of the sacred thread, or by some other detail. He lives well and eats meat and drinks liquor, which no true Sadhu does.

Sansis, like Bauriahs, live chiefly in the Punjab and the United Provinces. They travel all over India, but they have not adopted the other special methods of the Bauriahs described above. They are dirtier, and they are more prone to dacoity. The Bhantus and Kanjars have already been mentioned as addicted to dacoity to an extent sufficient to invite the attentions of the Special Dacoity Police. The Karwal Nats is the common appellation attached to these people farther east in Bengal, where they also commit dacoity and burglary. Unlike the Dehliwala Bauriahs, Sansis and Karwal Nats are frequently found wandering about India with their wives and children. They are very troublesome to the villagers on whose land they encamp. They steal chickens and growing crops on which they also graze their donkeys, bullocks or goats. They are very truculent and abusive if resentment at these courses is shown. If a small party of police attempt to search them or move them on they adopt a defiant attitude. They are filthy and indecent, and, if provoked, men and women will strip and indulge in disgust-

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ing and even revolting gestures and actions in order to make the Police desist if possible. A case has been recorded in which a woman of this class stripped and attacked a policeman using her infant as a weapon of offence, holding it by the legs.

Where people of this class have settled down and been able to earn a sufficient living, they have become decent members of society. Once a section of them has become addicted to crime, they are slow to give up the life, and often resist efforts to reclaim them. Many sections of those just mentioned, the Bauriahs, Sansis and the rest, have been addicted to crime since long before the days of the British administration. They early attracted the attention of British officials, who sought for means to reform them as well as to repress their criminal habits. The best means to this end have been well described as 'a bunch of carrots before and a stick behind'.

One of the most troublesome of the criminal tribes—and those so far mentioned are only some of the most numerous and prominent in the North—was that of the Minas. There are still Minas who deserve the name of criminal tribesmen, but none so inveterate, so skilful and so successful as were the Minas of Shahjehanpur in the Punjab.

These Minas were directly descended from the bands of freebooters who were employed in raids and forays by the chiefs of Rajputana in the 'brave days of old'. When the *pax Britannica* put an end to these dashing and profitable adventures, the Minas continued to indulge in dacoity on a grand scale.

In 1856 a circular had been issued in the Punjab making the Sansis, Bauriahs and two other tribes amenable to a system of roll-call. This was extended to the Minas by executive order, and was enforced for some years, although, as afterwards appeared, it lacked any legal authority. It was not very effective, because the agency available to hold the roll-call was not above entering a man as present for several days when he was absent on a marauding expedition. The question of the activities of the Minas came to the notice of

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the Thagi and Dacoity Department, and Colonel Hervey, the 'General Superintendent of Operations', wrote as follows about them in the year 1870:

'It is a fact that Shahjehanpur is inhabited almost exclusively by Mina plunderers. As many as 500 adult males have habitation there, and distant robbery is notoriously their profession and their livelihood. Their houses are built of substantial masonry, some with upper storeys to them and with underground passages. Fine wells have been constructed at their own expense. The land they cultivate, and for which they pay revenue, yields no more than would be sufficient for a fourth part only of the population, men, women and children combined, which the number of their adult males represents. They maintain fleet camels, some of which may be found secreted in their premises in readiness for an expedition, or but now returned from some unknown raid. Cows, buffaloes and goats are among their possessions; they live amid abundance and they want for nothing. . . . Trinkets of gold and silver and fine dresses adorn, on pleasure days, the persons of their females; gold and coral necklaces, ear-rings and good turbans are the display of the men. . . . Music and every requirement without stint form the accompaniments of their feasts; revelling and quarrel mark their termination. Plenty they have, plenty they spend, and plenty they bestow, and there is no end to their charity. Ordinary people give alms to those who petition for it at their doors, but the charity of the Minas of Shahjehanpur is *sadda-bart*; it is perpetual, and invites all comers to partake of it. Corn and provisions are liberally distributed to those who seek for them. . . . With all this profusion and munificence, the men have no ostensible occupation, no means from which to meet so much extravagance. The ground they till would scarcely sustain ten families, much less so many; the place has no appearance of neglect and desertion from the continued, and sometimes prolonged, absence of the men. . . . What does all this mean and from where do these men really obtain their livelihood, with so much to spare?'

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The answer to this question is contained in the subsequent portion of the report. 'Associating with a highly favoured courtier, the near attendant of a sovereign, and five men belonging to a camel corps, they committed a dacoity in which the plunder consisted of silver in bricks, gold coins, corals and other property valued at Rs 27,000.' In another case six of them mounted on camels and armed with muskets surrounded a convoy and carried off a large amount.

In other similar affairs they got away with Rs 79,000 worth of treasure, and Rs 90,000 worth of gold mohurs and precious stones, after a sword fight with the escort; and again Rs 38,000 worth of treasure laden on eight camels in Jodhpur territory. Most of their operations were carried on in 'foreign territory', that is, in various Indian States, and they were declared to be the most skilful burglars and dacoits known, never engaging in petty cases, rarely taking anything but gold, silver and jewels. They associated with other Minas in Alwar and Jaipur States, and at the suggestion of the Punjab Government the Government of India addressed the Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana regarding the desirability of measures being taken by the States to control the Minas in their territories. Proposals to establish a reformatory for those in British India were made and considered in detail, and in 1875 it was decided to notify them as a criminal tribe under the Act. Among the evidence laid before the Government of India in support of this proposal was a statement prepared by the Thagi and Dacoity Department dealing with 142 dacoities of the boldest description in which they had secured plunder of the aggregate value of Rs 4,090,000, or over £400,000 at the rates of exchange then current.

In 1880 many of them were in jail, and those who were at large seemed to have been cowed by the action taken against them; but the difficulties in the way of providing the whole of them with adequate means of earning an honest livelihood had not been overcome. These difficulties were many; the situation of their village, the cost of removing them to another

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locality and establishing them there, and their unwillingness to work.

In 1882 Mr. Christie, the District Superintendent of Police, began to take a personal interest in the Minas of Shahjehanpur. He found that the number of them in the village had dropped from 630 in 1876 to 230 in 1882, and that some were settled in other villages and earning an honest living. He found that those who were left in Shahjehanpur were in circumstances requiring immediate relief. He obtained the co-operation of the Deputy Commissioner, who arranged for the grant of advances to selected men for the purchase of bullocks to draw their ploughs and to purchase seed. He induced and encouraged neighbouring landowners to employ others in cultivation. He found two men making mats, which they had learned to do in jail, and he succeeded in developing the industry into a small factory and arranged for the sale of the mats. He enlisted the son of one of the leading families as a sergeant, other promising young men as constables, and carefully watched their instruction and training in the lines. He considered that the tribe was crushed and broken and had received a severe lesson. Instead of a strong police guard of fifteen men which had been posted in the village, he strengthened the police station in whose jurisdiction it stood, and ordered the station house officer to hold surprise roll-calls twice a week on any night at any hour in place of a daily roll-call. He arranged for the names of those who earned an honest living to be struck off the roll; and he recommended that a good and able officer, specially selected for his tact, conciliatory measures and detective acumen, should always be posted in charge of the police station. He also expressed the opinion that a European officer should visit the place at least once a month, and that 'all help, whether in cash, land, materials or otherwise, should be given direct by the district officers and not through any native agency'. This practice, he said, would be appreciated by the Minas and afford satisfaction to the officers concerned.

The result of this was that the Minas were reformed, and

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did not revert to serious crime. In 1914 the position was reviewed by Pandit Hari Kishen Kaul and Mr. Tomkins, when dealing with the problem of the criminal tribes in the Punjab. They found that the Minas were not committing any but very minor offences and very few of those, and that Mr. Christie's name was still revered in the village. They recommended that similar principles should be applied elsewhere whenever possible.

Some of the Minas, who had left Shahjehanpur, apparently joined others in Rajputana and continued to have a bad reputation.

Another tribe which has been successfully reformed is that of the Chapperbands of the southern Maratha country. Twenty-five years ago they used to travel all over India in gangs, counterfeiting coin by a simple process of their own and passing it off on simple people. They were reformed by the Criminal Tribes Settlement officer under the Bombay Government.

Some Berads in the southern Maratha country, when confined to a settlement, used to obtain leave from the settlement officials on the plea of hunting. This was given on the ground that some such natural relaxation was necessary. They utilized the opportunity to commit crime, and subsequently succeeded, very adroitly, in embroiling the settlement officials in a dispute with the Police in a mistaken attempt to defend them against the allegation.

The Berads are a very interesting people, of whom an account was given by Colonel Meadows Taylor in his *Story of My Life*. The ruling family of the State of Shorapur, where he was at one time regent during the minority of the Raja, belonged to this tribe. He described them as the 'Clans of the Twelve Thousand', valorous, chivalrous and lawless, far superior to Bhils or Gonds, owing allegiance only to their clans, and practically free from all other control. There are about 90,000 Berads in the Bombay Presidency. Some are Jaghirdars, that is holders of large estates on a kind of feudal tenure. Others are hereditary village headmen. Many are



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small landowners or hard-working cultivators. Others again are village servants, field labourers, domestic servants or millhands.

From time to time, without any special provocation, there is an outbreak of dacoity among them; gangs are formed and go into outlawry and defy the authorities. As Mr. Kennedy says, the blood of the freebooter runs in their veins.

In 1895 there was a considerable outbreak in which large bodies of Armed Police and troops were employed. The nature of the country made the operations very difficult, and it was only after the Police had lost a number of men killed, wounded or mutilated that the offer of large rewards ultimately led to the leaders being betrayed by informers. Though the back of the movement was thus broken, it was several months before peace was finally restored to the countryside. Another, but smaller, outbreak occurred in 1922, in which the Police also suffered casualties. One of the Berad gangs broke out of jail and succeeded in remaining at large in the jungles of Bijapur District for nine months. They terrorized the whole countryside, and were eventually exterminated as a result of a well-thought-out campaign organized by the District Superintendent, Mr. F. O'Gorman. His untiring tenacity and his courage in action—he was twice under their fire—finally led to success. Sub-Inspector Shiva-shetti, who displayed great coolness under fire at close range on the 17th May and led the attack on the 5th July when the Berad leader was shot, received the King's Police Medal for his part in this campaign, as did two Head Constables of the Bijapur District Police for gallantry in the attack on the 17th May.

The great family of hunting peoples to which the Bauriah and the Sansi belong is represented in the south of the peninsula by the Pardhis and the Haran-shikaris, both of which names signify hunters. These people are as a rule nomadic, and they are given to dacoity, highway robbery and burglary. They are dirty, wear hardly any clothes, and



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neither shave nor comb their hair. They are, like most of the criminal hunting tribes, beyond the pale of Hinduism, their marriage and other ceremonies being performed by members of their own tribe. The Brahmin priests will have nothing to do with them.

They are very skilful in trapping and snaring all kinds of game, including pig, gazelle, hare, partridge, pigeon and quail. Their snares and nets are very strongly and neatly made; and they can imitate the call of wild animals, peacock, quail, hare, jackal and others, so perfectly that the animals themselves are deceived. They are still able to earn a living by hunting—they sell some of the game in the markets of big towns like Poona—and do not, therefore, devote all their energies to crime.

As is the case with all the other tribes of this kind, the difficulties in the way of their advancement and reform arise partly from inexorable economic facts and partly from their own qualities and character, which are the result of the history of their ethnological development. A distinguished Brahmin officer, Rao Sahib B. V. Kelkar, Deputy Superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department at Poona, has been chiefly responsible for an experiment now being made to induce some of the Phase Pardhis to settle down to agricultural labour in the sugar-cane fields at Belapur in the Ahmednagar District. It promises to be a success, although some doubt is naturally felt as to whether their normal roaming instincts may not reassert themselves. This settlement and others in the Sholapur District, where Pardhis have been given work in the cotton mills, are supervised by the District Superintendents of Police.

Another community, ethnologically somewhat similar but far more criminal, is that known by the name of Kaikadi or Korwa in the southern Maratha country and as Kuravar all over the Madras Presidency. These people are both nomadic and settled; and they number about 25,000 in Bombay and 300,000 in Madras. Their hereditary profession is crime, and any other pursuits in which they may engage are of a very

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subsidiary nature. The only exception to this sweeping statement is that, in some parts of Madras, a section of them, the Kavalgar, has the hereditary occupation of watchman. Even this is merely a form of blackmail, as any village which did not pay a Kavalgar would not be left in peace for a moment by the other sections of this criminal tribe. Individuals who fail to subscribe to the upkeep of the watch are said to have to pay heavily for the return of stolen property. There are stories of European officers who refused to employ Kavalgars being so skilfully and persistently burgled that they had to 'give the Kuravar best', and pay the Kavalgar.

The habits and customs of these people have been very fully described by W. J. Hatch in his *The Land Pirates of India*. He shows how far from orthodox Hinduism they are in that their women, so far from being devoted for life to one husband by an indissoluble bond, can not only procure divorce, but, more or less as a matter of course, become the temporary wives of another on occasions of the absence of the husbands in jail.

The caste system has developed in the Madras Presidency and the south-east of the peninsula to an extent unknown in the rest of India. So marked is this, that some authorities consider that it is a feature of the Dravidian peoples of these parts, and that it has originated among them and has spread from that centre to other Hindus. There is no trace in the Vedas of anything approaching the caste system of Madras, which has decreed that certain castes should not approach within twelve paces, others within twenty-four paces and others within forty-eight paces of other castes and so on. Under this elaborate series of arrangements regulating all the movements and doings of the people, and in consequence of the domination of such ideas, even the thief has a caste as such. The Kuravar and the Kallar, who are the corresponding robber caste of Madura, are the living embodiment of this conception.

In the eighteenth century, when the Maratha armies were overrunning the South of India, their main object was to

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levy tribute. They made no serious attempt to administer any but the territories surrounding their homes on the Western Ghats, and these tribute-levying expeditions often became in reality plundering forays. As such they naturally attracted all the ne'er-do-wells of the countries through which they passed on their way to Kathiawar or Delhi, Bengal or Madras. Old soldiers of the armies of decaying or disrupted states, common robbers and all the lawless flotsam of territories without a settled government joined the Maratha forays. The terror they struck and the havoc they wrought have been most picturesquely described by the old Madras diarist, Ananda Pillay, who as a wealthy trader was intimately concerned in these happenings. The advent of a strong government and more settled conditions, which came in with the British Raj, put a curb on the activities of these lawless bands, and they, perforce, settled down in time to smaller ventures, an occasional dacoity and the like. Their descendants to this day are lawless folk, such as the Kuravars and Kallars of Southern India.

The Madras Government has for some years carried on an attempt to reclaim the Kallars with varying success. The method adopted has been to restrict and restrain them under the provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act, to provide them with work, and to induce them to adopt a system of self-government under *panchayats*, or committees of the caste, under the general supervision of officials subject to the control of District Magistrates, and later of the Commissioner of Labour.

In the hills of Kurnool, between Mysore and the Dominions of His Exalted Highness the Nizam, there lives a primitive forest tribe known as the Chenchus. The Madras Presidency Police have found the Chenchus in their remote forests, with their lack of adaptability to modern conditions, no easy problem. They issue from the depth of the forest, kill and rob their more civilized neighbours—and disappear behind the protective shelter of the leaves.

For three years Sub-Inspector Saiyid Hussain of the

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Madras Police took a leading part in hunting a gang of Chenchus who had robbed and murdered in the villages bordering on the Nallamalais in Kurnool. On the 3rd of March 1929 he was pursuing the last remnant of the gang, only five in number and headed by one Bygadu. The long trail had led to the depth of the Thummalabail forest and he was in charge of the advance party of police. Leaving the party to go forward and scout, accompanied only by a Chenchu informant named Veerigadu, he came upon the gang unexpectedly at midnight. They were hiding in some ruined huts, but, getting wind of the two men, rushed out and greeted them with a shower of arrows. Veerigadu dropped at his side, but the officer nothing daunted called upon the gang to surrender. This summons served only to direct another shower of arrows towards him. A gun was also fired at him, and he replied by firing two rounds of buckshot at the Chenchus. Then his weapon failed him and he ran back to his supports. Seizing a gun from a constable, he led them to the attack. After a contest in the darkness lasting for some minutes the firing from the other side ceased. Bygadu had been shot and his followers had fled. Deprived of their leader, the rest grew disheartened, but it was several weeks before they were all captured. The great forests guard their own.

A complete list and description of all the criminal tribes of India would fill more than one volume. The above-mentioned tribes, the Bhampta railway thieves, the Miana dacoits, the Ramoshis, the Minas, the Bhantus, Kanjars, Sansis, Bauriahs, Pardhis, Haran-shikaris, Karwal Nats, Kaikadis, Kuravar, Kallar and Chenchus are typical or prominent. There are many others which have not been mentioned, but do not differ greatly from one or other of these peoples in their general characteristics. They all have this in common, that they are descended either from aboriginal hunting tribes or from communities of freebooters, who lived on loot during the long period of disturbances when Huns, Pathans, Moghuls and finally Marathas harried the land.

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They are people who failed to adapt themselves to the settled life of an agriculturalist and either developed their hunting instincts or, when open disorder was put down with a strong hand, adhered to more degenerate forms of foray.

No very reliable estimate of the numbers of wandering gangs is available. Their number may perhaps be of the order of a quarter of a million. The number of the settled peoples who belong to tribes commonly called criminal may be in the neighbourhood of three or four million, but not all of these are habitual criminals.

The Criminal Tribes Act is designed to deal with these people. The ultimate object is to wean them from crime, which, in effect, involves arranging for them to earn their living by some other means. For this purpose the Act empowers the Government to confine registered members of criminal tribes within the area of an industrial or agricultural settlement.

Before a tribe is notified as a criminal tribe under the Act by the local Government, the Police are required to produce evidence regarding their criminality and the need for such action. When the notification has been issued, the next step is to register individuals who have a criminal record. When that has been done, steps can be taken to restrict them to a certain area, which may be a village or a taluka or any larger area. Anyone who has been restricted in this way is liable to imprisonment if found outside the area to which he has been restricted.

Some people have been restricted in this way to a taluka where they can obtain work as field labourers or otherwise. Others have been restricted to a town where work has been found for them in a factory or a cotton mill. Others have been confined to an enclosed settlement where they are required to live and work under conditions not very different from imprisonment, with the important exception that their families accompany them and that they have more freedom and scope for improvement. The Police are not ordinarily concerned with the regular settlements which are managed

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by officials or persons belonging to philanthropical societies. The lead in this matter was taken some years ago by the Salvation Army, and their good example has been followed by the Arya Samaj, a Hindu Society which seeks to reform the outcasts and at the same time to bring or keep them within the pale of Hinduism.

The numbers in settlements are very small compared with the whole criminal population. Numbers like 3,500 in Bombay, 5,000 in Madras, 2,500 in the United Provinces suggest the proverbial drop in the ocean. Nevertheless, these settlements have achieved more than the mere numbers suggest.

The Police would be glad to see them multiplied by ten or more, but the expense involved has prevented extension on an adequate scale. The finances of the local governments have not enabled them to keep pace with the development of police opinion on problems of criminology. There are many demands on the purse of a government, and most of them are pressed more forcefully and more persistently than the Police can press the urgent need of steps to diminish the immense volume of crime. Before anything can be done on the scale required, police opinion must be reinforced by the far more considerable weight of public opinion. Unfortunately some sections of Indian public opinion have been diverted by the mirage effects of 'Non-Co-operation'; and, in the present early stages of learning the lessons of self-government, others have not yet come to attach as much weight to the importance of problems of criminality, from a nation-building point of view, as a policeman could desire.

Apart from the tribes which deserve the name of 'criminal' in view of the fact that crime is their chief or their only occupation, there are others which, though not so persistently given to crime, are yet liable to periodical outbreaks, largely in virtue of a primitiveness of life and outlook which they have not yet outgrown. Such are the Kolis, Bhils, Gonds and Sonthals. Of these the Kolis are agriculturalists and the other three are hunting tribes, who have settled and taken to agriculture in varying degrees.



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The Kolis were apparently driven south by the Rajputs many centuries ago. At any rate they now occupy land in Gujerat and along the Sahayadri mountains. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the absence of any power strong enough to maintain order had resulted in general lawlessness, the Kolis were among the most troublesome people who confronted the British in their attempts to bring peace and good government to the disordered land. Nowhere in India were the roads so unsafe as in Gujerat. They went about plundering in bands hundreds strong. In 1825, according to the *Gazetteer*, they still wore chain armour and were very proud of their feats of arms; they carried rhinoceros-hide shields with silver bosses, battleaxes and bows. One section of Kolis were known as Dharalas, or swordsmen, and this section has in the twentieth century broken out into a renewal of lawlessness. All through the 'twenties and 'thirties of last century, when this part of the country first came under our administration, the Kolis gave a great deal of trouble to the British officers of the Gujerat Districts, but they gradually settled down as good cultivators under the all-pervading influence of the *pax Britannica* and the general increase of trade and wealth which came in its train.

Their predatory instincts were, however, never quite subdued. A season of scarcity, the grasping demands of some avaricious moneylender, or domestic trouble from time to time drive a Koli into outlawry. Once an outlaw has made a reputation he soon attracts others, and then before very long the gang are the heroes of the countryside, at least among their own people. They receive assistance from Kolis generally, and active sympathy and information in their campaign against the moneylenders, the forest guards and the Police.

The hill Kolis of the Western Ghats or Sahayadris are not very numerous, and they are not criminal apart from their periodical outbreaks. One of the most famous occurred in 1845 when an outlaw named Raghoji Bhangria went about



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at the head of organized gangs slitting the noses of greedy moneylenders, until the whole community fled in terror.

In 1857-8, when the disturbances in Northern India brought about a general feeling of unrest, a corps of hill Kolis was raised and did very useful service under Captain Nuttal in putting down local disturbances.

In 1873 there was another important period of Koli outlawry in consequence of growing demands from the money-lending fraternity, and smaller outbreaks have occurred subsequently from time to time.

In 1930 the excitement caused by Gandhi's campaign temporarily upset the Kolis of the Nasik District, who were led to believe that the 'British Raj' had come to an end. Several thousands collected in the hills and surrounded a force of 100 Armed Police under the District Superintendent and the District Magistrate. As they were armed, in large numbers and defiant, the Police had to open fire. When a few shots had taken effect, the bands dispersed, and the leaders 'came in' and explained that they had been misled.

Many of the Kolis are good shots though their muskets are not as a rule very efficient or modern. They will fight desperately, and outlaw gangs have been known to ambush and cut up small parties of police. Mr. Kennedy mentions that Koli informers are most difficult to obtain, and, when secured, require constant protection. There is a case on record in which a party of eight policemen were attacked and wounded and a spy in their charge was wrested from them and crucified.

The Kolis of the plains of Gujerat number about one and a half millions. They are also apt to 'go out' into outlawry like their brethren of the hills, and a certain proportion of them are given to ordinary habitual crime, burglary or theft. The Dharala section are registered as members of a criminal tribe if they commit serious crime, to which, as a result of losing their lands to the wealthier classes, many of them have been addicted in recent years. About a thousand are now so registered.

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To the east of the Koli country lies that of the Bhils who are aborigines. It is a significant fact that the proudest Raja of Rajputana is not considered to have been duly enthroned until a mark has been placed on his forehead by a Bhil. This is generally regarded as carrying an admission that the Bhils were the original people of the soil.

The heart of the Bhil country is the Satpura Range of hills, the scene of the story by Rudyard Kipling which gives the best description of the Bhils ever written. South of this range lies the British province of Khandesh, now divided between four districts.

Captain Briggs, the first British officer posted to Khandesh—in 1818—reported that the whole country had been devastated under the Peshwas. The Bhils, having nothing to live on, were plundering everywhere. They were then more wild than they are now. Civilizing influences have since reached them in many ways, not the least being the results of from one to two thousand being employed for 100 years in the Bhil Corps and the Armed Police. The jungle has been cleared in the plains of Khandesh, and many of them are now diligent cultivators. Nevertheless the instinct to plunder breaks out on occasion. Like the hill Kolis, they are apt to 'go out' and for precisely similar reasons, scarcity, the avarice of moneylenders or as a result of a collision with the law over a petty theft, a woman or some domestic quarrel.

The Bhils are small men, dark and ugly; happy-go-lucky, improvident and cheerful. They are very fond of drink, and enjoy getting thoroughly drunk on suitable occasions. The wild hill Bhils are especially superstitious. The Bhils are regarded as Hindus, but many of their beliefs are of an animistic nature. They still keep up a number of primitive customs, among them being the Bhil dance. They worship a Wag-dev (tiger-god), snakes and stones, and they believe in witchcraft. This last leads to the murder of a certain number of old women.

The young Bhil women are great admirers of a bold outlaw, and will desert home and husband under the influence of

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the glamour and romance of his deeds. Outlaw gangs use great violence, especially if they meet with resistance when committing dacoity or attacking moneylenders against whom they have a grudge. Cold-blooded brutality such as that of a Bhil outlaw who roasted a village headman on an improvised spit some years ago is the exception. They do not as a rule offer very determined resistance to the Bhil Corps, who are better armed than they usually are. Their weapons are often bows and arrows, with which they are very expert. There have been isolated instances of outlawry, but no serious Bhil outbreaks during the last thirty years. This must be attributed to the general prosperity of Khandesh, with its rich cotton trade, and to the measures which have helped to free them from their former chronic indebtedness to the moneylenders.

The story of how the great Outram, then a youth of twenty-two (but with six years' service with the Colours), succeeded in gaining the confidence of the wild Bhils and founding the Bhil Corps in 1826, has been told, largely in Outram's own words, in a history of the Bhil Corps by A. H. Simcox, formerly District Magistrate of Khandesh. It is a story which no one can read without realizing the extraordinary interest of a great and humane achievement. To those who, like the present writer, have served with the Bhils and felt their response to their British officers—a hundred years later—it touches on one of the most significant experiences in a varied life in the Indian Police. The relationship between the two—representatives of the most civilized and one of the most backward races—has been since Outram's day *sans peur et sans reproche*. It is based on mutual respect, and it bears no stain. Each recognizes the good qualities and the deficiencies of the other. Each has a sense of humour; and they have in common a love of shikar and courage. The Bhil has no respect for the 'sportsman' who sits in a tree to shoot big game. He likes to see it 'walked up'.

The idea of founding a Bhil Corps originated, according to Simcox, with that great administrator Mountstuart Elphin-

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stone. He certainly took a personal interest in the scheme, and, as a result, the Government of Bombay addressed the Commander-in-Chief with a request for officers to be selected for the purpose by Colonel Robertson, the Collector of Khandesh. The choice fell on Lieutenant Outram, who had an excellent record as Adjutant of the 23rd Native Infantry and a reputation for being able to act on his own initiative in the field and as a great shikari.

The reports of Lieutenant Outram show the initiative he at once displayed, and his readiness to assume responsibility, when he made use of a detachment of his old regiment (now known as 'Outram's Rifles') to effect a surprise attack on a gathering of Bhils. He has given us a vivid picture of the red-coated sepoy suddenly appearing in the mountains and of the panic-stricken people of the jungle fleeing in all directions. He wrote: ' . . . I was then enabled to commence operations, and laid the foundations of the corps through the medium of my captives, some of whom were released to bring in the relatives of the rest on the pledge that they should all be set at liberty. I thus effected an intercourse with the leading Naicks; went alone with them into their jungles; gained their hearts by copious libations of brandy, and their confidence by living unguarded among them, and hunting with them, until, at last, I persuaded five of the most adventurous to risk their fortunes with me, which small beginning I considered ensured ultimate success.'

He was right, and from those five the number grew slowly to a hundred and then to the full strength of a battalion. The succession from them to the men of the Armed Police in Khandesh to-day is unbroken. Outram from the very beginning trained his Bhils to take an active part in capturing Bhil offenders, in which they showed themselves to be ready and zealous.

By an unfortunate coincidence the building which became his residence had been the scene of a massacre of Bhils, only eleven years previously, by their Maratha rulers who were

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unable to control them, and, with the intention of exterminating them, had treacherously collected them on similar grounds to those advanced by the new rulers. When a detachment of non-commissioned officers of the Line joined the Bhil Corps, then only ninety strong and four months old, the rumour spread that they had come to effect another massacre. Outram's tact and personality triumphed. Their new non-commissioned officers gave up their arms until they had also been issued to the Bhils, whose confidence was soon restored. This was not the first panic on account of the fear of massacre. On a previous occasion a gathering of a large number of people for a festival near their headquarters had caused a few to desert and flee the place in a panic, but Outram had reassured the rest who persuaded most of the deserters to return. He gradually accustomed them to drill and discipline, as well as to give up their excessive desire for strong drink. This fondness for liquor can never be eradicated. Quite recently a party of Bhil Police under training for a very severe test at the annual sports meeting at Poona were forbidden, under threat of heavy penalties, to touch drink by their District Superintendent of Police. After winning the most strenuous events from the Police of all the districts of the Presidency, they said to a young officer whom they trusted, 'Sahib, you must not say so to the Superintendent Sahib, but we trained on drink. Bhils run best after a drink.' Whatever the effect of the drink may have been, no one else could touch a Bhil runner in the mile, or in a 'Marathon race' of twenty miles.

When the Bengal Army mutinied in 1857, the unrest spread south to the Khandesh borders and some of the wild Bhils 'went out' in the time-honoured fashion. The Bhil Corps not only remained perfectly staunch, but performed some extraordinary marching feats in pursuit of the rebels and fought with credit by the side of detachments of the regular army in more than one strenuous local engagement. In particular those who fought at Amba Pani on the 11th April 1858 earned distinction, some of their number

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being 'mentioned in despatches', and the Corps received the medal for 'India, 1857-8'.

Thereafter their duties were more strictly of a police nature, and in 1891 the Bombay Government issued orders converting them into the Armed Police, adding, 'in order not to part hastily with the old designation, the official title of that Branch should for the present be the "Khandesh Armed Police (Bhil Corps)" '.

The Bhils are said to number about half a million, but this total appears to include a few scattered members of other aboriginal tribes who have been wrongly classed as Bhils.

The Gonds of the Central Provinces and the Santals of Bihar and Orissa are probably the best known of the Indian aboriginal races, the former because of their wonderful jungle lore and the latter on account of the Santal 'rebellion' of 1855. This 'rebellion', the most serious of the outbreaks among the Santals, was due to their resentment of the way in which the reign of law enabled the moneylender and the trader to exploit them and to reduce them to virtual serfdom. After 1855 the Santal country was excluded from the general regulations and was administered under a special agrarian law and a judicial system suited to the needs of these primitive peoples. The Bengalis, who have settled in the Santal country, have pressed for the removal of these special measures designed to protect the aboriginals from economic exploitation. The need for this special protection was emphasized recently by the Bihar and Orissa Government, who said that the Santals were unable to compete against the subtler minds of the Aryan races, and that their childlike outlook makes the duty of restoring order in the event of an outbreak among them peculiarly distasteful.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE IMPACT OF MODERN SCIENCE

**T**HERE IS infinite variety in the life of every great people, and a modern Police Force touches that life at many points. Of all the clichés which have attached themselves to India, the one which perhaps contains most truth is that which describes it as a land of contrasts. To all the existing contrasts of race, environment, creed, culture and occupation, modern science with all it has brought to the life of India has added fresh emphasis and new variety.

India did not, in spite of her close contact with one of the most progressive nations of the West, embrace modernity with the startling suddenness and wholehearted assurance of Japan. Even now there is much that is primitive, as we have seen when considering the hunting tribes, and much that is medieval, as we have seen in connexion with the peasantry. It has always been recognized that the civilization of the Hindus was a very ancient one, but recent discoveries suggest that it may go further back in the Indus valley, and by inference in that of the Ganges, than the civilizations of Sumer, Akkad and Badarian Egypt. It was very ancient when Gautama Buddha sought to find a middle way, and to divert its pristine formalism into fresh channels. In the end, in spite of the fresh impetus given to Buddhism by the incoming Scythian tribes, the old ideas and the ancient habits and customs reasserted themselves. All that is meant by the vague and comprehensive term 'Brahminism' triumphed: and to-day an almost naked Sanyasi ascetic may be seen riding behind an eight-cylinder engine.

It has long been the habit of writers to paint in vivid colours the 'mysterious East', and in particular certain French writers have recently emphasized this supposed



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quality. To the 10,000 officers of the Indian Police, whose duty is concerned with the investigation of crime and with the infinite variety which makes up the life of all these peoples, this quality of 'mystery' is unknown. Their cases may lead them into matters concerning the ritual of the temples, the muezzin in the mosques, the altar in the church of St. Xavier, the superstitions of witch-hunters, cattle-drovers or peasants, the management of banks or modern factories, the doings of those behind the purdah, ancient water rights, modern chemistry, primitive poisons, cocaine, primeval forests, ocean liners or a thousand and one things in the medley of everyday affairs. There is much of romance—of the kind which brings in the 9.15—in it, but little of mystery.

The slowness with which India adopted the inventions of modern science and Western ideas of social and political organization is to be attributed chiefly to the innate conservatism of all her peoples and, especially, of her religious leaders. So far from following the example of the Japanese, many of them have been influenced in the opposite direction by ideas such as those to which Gandhi has often given expression. Gandhi has, however, been forced into many contradictions in using the machines, the medical science and the inventions to which he objects.

Indians generally are ready enough to make use of the inventions of modern science, without much thought for theoretical objections, when once they have become established. Thus the motor-bus may be seen plying in many parts of the country. The services are financed by Indian capital and run by Indian firms; but this industry did not come into being in India until several years after similar services had been running in England.

The criminal is sometimes remarkably quick to adopt new methods. For instance, cinemas were not known in the bazaars of Karachi until shortly before the War. One of the earliest films shown was a 'Raffles' film in which the 'hero' used gloves to prevent his finger impressions from being left

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on a safe he opened. In a climate like that of Karachi no one wears gloves, and probably none of the local burglars had ever seen a pair; but, within a few days of the appearance of 'Raffles', a boy of eighteen wore a pair of gloves when breaking into a house. He was caught, however, and the bright idea did not gain adherents.

There are many people who hold that the influence of the cinema has been more harmful than otherwise in India. It has certainly suggested new forms of crime to many criminals and to some who were not previously addicted to crime. Wild-West films have provided inspiration to dacoits.

It was, of course, inevitable that modern influences should affect crime in India as they have affected every other aspect of Indian life. The British developed the telegraph system and the railways in the middle of last century, and Indian merchants started the mill industry in Bombay in the 'sixties. The Parsees of Western India, who were largely responsible for the growth of the textile industry, showed much greater aptitude for mechanics than is common among Indians. They also westernized themselves very early and rapidly without abandoning the essentials of their own religion and culture. By the middle of the 'eighties there were seventy cotton mills in Bombay, and the network of railways was spreading far and wide across India.

The Bhamptas, as we have seen, very quickly invented and specialized in a new form of crime on the railways.

From the 'eighties to the end of the first decade in the present century there was no very marked change in conditions so far as they depended on mechanical and scientific progress. In 1910 the motor-car was almost unknown in most parts of India. Saddle-horses and carts and carriages drawn by bullocks and ponies were the common means of conveyance. Telephones, electric light and power, cinemas and motor-buses came rapidly into widespread use in the next few years, and brought the need for increasing numbers of trained Indian mechanics.

The motor-car was soon used for crime, and mechanical

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knowledge was, naturally, used for the same purpose. About the same time—soon after 1910—German and Austrian sailors became very prominent in connexion with the smuggling of cocaine. The immense profits obtainable, once this imported vice had gained a footing, led to the establishment of new, and the development of existing, smuggling organizations. Once formed, they lent themselves to the smuggling of other things such as arms and explosives. The revolutionary movement, which simultaneously developed, created a demand for smuggled arms. Men of the types which had shown such wonderful skill in the marvelously intricate carving in ivory and woodwork for which India was famous, soon displayed a similar, but perverted, skill in making arrangements to conceal cocaine and other deadly drugs. Moreover, they learned new methods and new ideas from the European criminals with whom, for the first time, they came in contact in a criminal undertaking on a large scale.

Forgery and similar crimes in connexion with documents require great skill and minute attention to detail. Some of the ministers and clerks who surrounded the princes of India in the eighteenth century, when the British agents and officers were in most active contact with them, had a reputation second only to that of the European contemporaries of Machiavelli for adroitness of this kind. With the introduction of the currency note the Indian forger turned his attention to the attractive opportunities it offered. Where the vast majority of the population is unable to read and write, it is easy to produce a note which, crudely drawn by hand, will deceive the most ignorant; and hand-made forgeries and roughly altered currency notes have brought considerable profits to the perpetrators. Process-made forged currency notes have also passed into circulation in large numbers from time to time. A gang of skilled forgers comes to light now in Rajputana, next in one of the remote districts of Madras, and then in Rangoon. The area over which rupee notes are current is so large that the forgers have many

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facilities for uttering them in several provinces before the Police can receive any indication of the province, the district and finally the town in which the work is being done. One of the most accomplished gangs worked quietly in Rangoon for some time, and their products were uttered in every part of India before the Police obtained any clue as to their identity.

In February 1926 the District Superintendent of Police, Ahmedabad, forwarded a forged Rs 100 note (value about £7) to the Criminal Investigation Department at Poona with the opinion that it was process-made. Expert opinion decided that it was hand-made. Another note of a similar description had been uttered at the railway station at Ahmedabad a few days later, and it was therefore decided to make special inquiries in that neighbourhood. While these inquiries were in progress, a man named Jaswantsingh of Jaipur was arrested, also in Ahmedabad, in the act of uttering two similar notes. This stroke of luck led the Police to Jaipur, where, with the help of the Police of that State, information was received which led to the discovery of six of these notes, in a partly finished condition, in the house of one Ramgopal.

Ramgopal was in the habit of making these notes by the following method. He selected notepaper of a superior quality and cut it into pieces the size of a Rs 100 note. He then placed it over a genuine note and traced the outlines of the design with a sharp pencil. He next drew them properly and filled them in with coloured inks. He reproduced the appearance of the water-marks by impressions obtained from a copper block specially prepared for the purpose. The block, after being smeared with nitric acid and oil, was pressed on the back of the forged note; and, to add to the genuineness of the appearance of the forgery, before it was uttered postal date stamps were also forged and affixed on the back to make it appear that the note had passed through the hands of the Post Office. The result was effective enough for over thirty of these notes to be disposed of in a few months by

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Jaswantsingh and his agents. Ramgopal received Rs 60 for every note he produced. Considering that his work was good enough to deceive the Police and was only detected by an expert in the Currency Office, he probably considered that he had earned the greater part of the profits.

In recent years nickel coins have been introduced into the coinage of India. They are of the value of one, two, and four annas. An anna is only worth about a penny, but a large number of people think it worth while to counterfeit the two-anna and four-anna coins. These are made in rough clay moulds, and in spite of the crudity of the materials are surprisingly good and deceive any but an expert. In the circumstances detection is not easy, but every year a certain number of people are convicted and sent to prison for this offence. Two criminal tribes, the Chapperbands and the Marwari Bauriahs, used to be known to the Police as the chief counterfeiters of India, but in the last few years the crime has spread to other sections of the population.

In 1927 Rao Sahib Naraindas of the Sind C.I.D. was engaged in an unusual case, the investigation of which took him to England, and demonstrated how easily the scientific knowledge of Europe can now become available for criminal purposes in India.

A retired military officer, by name Captain Farrell, came into contact with the firm of Mahomedali Brothers of Duzdap, Quetta, Seistan and Karachi. He entered into partnership with the several members of this firm under the name and style of the North-West India Trading Company. In the intimacy of this association it was suggested that, on account of the low price of silver prevailing in 1925, the counterfeiting of rupees would be an extremely profitable undertaking and would involve little risk, if a counterfeit, perfect both in execution and in intrinsic value, could be made. The profit would arise from the difference between the intrinsic and the nominal value of the coin.

The project was communicated to one Dickinson, to whom Farrell had recently given an appointment. Dickinson was a

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native of Birmingham, and, on being sent home with funds provided by Mahomedali Brothers, got into touch with one Wheeler in that city. Wheeler agreed, for heavy payments, to supply the dies of various Asiatic coins, including those of a rupee. Dickinson arrived in Karachi in September 1925, by the same steamer as the dies which were passed through the Customs concealed in an engine shaft and, later, removed by Dickinson to Duzdap in Seistan. At Duzdap they were handed over, according to Dickinson, to Ghulam Abbas of the firm of Mahomedali Brothers.

As Dickinson had brought out only one obverse die, and it was agreed that more than one date was desirable, Farrell proceeded to England and after some trouble, due to lukewarmness on the part of Dickinson, also got into touch with Wheeler. He paid him considerable sums of money for a series of dies.

When they were despatched to Karachi by the *S.S. City of Cambridge* which arrived on the 25th January, they were enclosed in a case purporting to contain machinery. The bill of lading was sent to Farrell, having been made out in the name of a firm in Lahore. Farrell sent it to a clearing agent in Karachi, who subsequently testified that they received it from the Lahore firm of whom they knew nothing. Farrell was in Karachi at the time, and so was Ghulamali of the firm of Mahomedali Brothers who had come down from Quetta to meet the consignment.

By great good fortune and the zeal of the Customs authorities the dies were found. The matter was at once placed in the hands of the Sind C.I.D. The letter enclosing the bill of lading was found later to have been typed by Farrell and signed by Ghulamali. A telegram to the Lahore Police elicited, as was expected, the fact that the firm in whose name the consignment was made did not exist. Farrell was questioned and was unable to give a consistent statement of his position, and he finally made a clean breast of the whole affair. His evidence implicated Dickinson, Mahomedali, Ghulamali, Wheeler, Ghulam Abbas and Akhbarali, the



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clearing agent. Dickinson was arrested, and also made a confession. A detailed and prolonged investigation in India and in England produced a mass of evidence to corroborate these two confessions. Wheeler was extradited from England to stand his trial in India. Farrell was treated as an approver and gave evidence for the Crown.

All the accused were convicted in the Sessions Court in Karachi and received heavy sentences.

In many ways the Police in the cities, not only in Calcutta and Bombay, but in the more important provincial cities like Lahore, Lucknow, or Nagpur, now find themselves faced with problems altogether different from those arising from the ancient customs and circumstances of the country. The spread of education and technical knowledge and the improvement of communications in India, and between India and the outside world, have brought about a revolutionary increase in the more sophisticated forms of crime. Cheating, forgery, coining, and embezzlement are not new in India, but they have developed entirely new forms through closer contact with the modern world, and, as an unfortunate consequence, with the European criminal. Bogus company promoting, misleading or definitely fraudulent financial concerns, life-assurance companies, floated on deplorable terms, managed with cynicism and obviously bound for bankruptcy, fraudulent fee-snatching employment bureaux and other traps for the ignorant and the unwary find an increasing place in the various police reports. One of the commonest and most mischievous forms of fraud has been a series of variations on the theme known as the 'multiple-entrance-fee cum snowball' fallacy. By this means hundreds of poor people have been cheated, being induced by deceptive promises of easy loans to subscribe and to obtain subscriptions from their friends. The results have been extremely harmful from an economic point of view, especially when it became apparent that the law was ill adapted to a solution of the problem.

For instance, two men known to the Bombay City C.I.D. as cheats under the names of D. D. Oza and M. H. Joshi,



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suddenly blossomed out as 'The International Publicity Stores, Ltd.' in 1924. They issued a prospectus, and announced that a company was being floated with a capital of Rs 500,000. The names of the directors were well known to the C.I.D., some of them having previous convictions for cheating. For some time no action could be taken in the absence of any definite information against the company, although the presumption was that it was likely to be conducted on fraudulent lines. The matter was kept under observation, and finally an opportunity to inquire into the affairs of the company presented itself when the Automobile Company of Bombay made a complaint of cheating in respect of a motor-car valued at Rs 7,500. This made it possible to examine the status of the company, and it was ascertained that it had not been registered and that the prospectus contained materially false representations. The only capital at its disposal had been obtained by criminal breach of trust of securities taken from its employees.

In 1925 several complaints were received from firms in Europe against two firms in Bombay known as N. L. Roy & Co. and the Phoenix Bankers. It was found that both firms were in reality a person named Natverlal Shah. When inquiries were started, the 'firms' were closed down. No action could be taken as no one was forthcoming in India to make a complaint. Eventually in 1926 a gentleman arrived from Europe with a power of attorney on behalf of a firm which had been cheated by one of an ingenious series of frauds. Natverlal Shah was traced, and it was found that he had been ordering goods from firms in Europe in the name of N. L. Roy, in each case giving the name of his bankers as the Phoenix Bankers, Kothari Mansions, Bombay. The latter address was that of a room rented by him. The goods were despatched to N. L. Roy & Co., and the shipping documents to the Phoenix Bankers for delivery only against payment. The value of the property in respect of which charges could be preferred was Rs 4,700. Natverlal Shah was convicted and sentenced to a year's imprisonment.

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In October 1927 the proprietor of Pathé (India) lodged a complaint of criminal breach of trust as a servant against his cashier, Rustom Merwanji Vaid, in respect of Rs 182,000. During the course of two years the accused had misappropriated over Rs 300,000 of which he had returned over Rs 100,000. In order to cover these defalcations he had falsified the accounts to such an extent that it was very difficult to put them in order or to ascertain the exact amount which he had abstracted. He had spent all the money in speculations which had gone wrong.

On the 8th July 1926 the Secretary of the Central Bank of India reported to the Police that a clerk in the bank, whose name was Dorab Pestonji Gora, had misappropriated Government securities of the face value of Rs 187,000. It was his duty to take these securities to the Public Debt Office for renewal, collection of interest, consolidation, etc. He had forged endorsements on some of these securities.

In January 1927 one Harihar Kulkarni, *alias* B. G. Potdar, caused an advertisement to appear in the newspapers of Bombay to the effect that he was prepared to train students in telegraphy, typewriting and railway work, and to assure them of employment. He collected fees and charges in advance from a number of students and disappeared with Rs 918 of their money. He was arrested in Poona, tried and convicted.

In February 1928 the Collector of Customs, Bombay, informed the Police that defalcations had been traced in the drawback department of the Bombay Customs House. Nine persons were arrested in connexion with these defalcations, including an appraiser in the Customs Department and a clerk employed by a customs dalal (broker), who were eventually convicted. The defalcations involved the preparation of false bills and all the supporting documents in respect of large consignments of goods which had actually never been shipped. The defalcations amounted to a total of Rs 600,000, or nearly £50,000.

In 1920 the officials of the Bank of Bombay discovered that

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the bank had been defrauded to the extent of several lakhs of rupees. On the day that the matter was reported to the Police, Sunderrao Govindrao Ranjit, Deputy Superintendent in the Accounts Department, left the bank and disappeared. Inquiries showed that he had falsified the accounts and cheated the bank to the extent of Rs 1,680,000, or nearly £125,000. He had made false entries in the accounts of certain constituents of the bank, in particular in that of Khusru Banaji, and Banaji had been enabled to draw sums greatly in excess of the amount to his credit. He was arrested, tried and sentenced to six years' imprisonment, but there was no trace of Sunderrao. Eight years later the Kurundwar State Police arrested a man named Gopal Shankar Kale in connexion with a crime committed in their jurisdiction, some 200 miles from Bombay. He stated that he belonged to Poona, but would not give any further information about himself. The State Police wrote to the Commissioner of Police, Bombay, to say that they had received somewhat vague information that he had been concerned in a bank fraud in Poona or Bombay. The Bombay City C.I.D. had obtained the photograph of Sunderrao at the time of the inquiry in 1920, and, on the chance that the man arrested in Kurundwar might be Sunderrao, it was sent to the State Police. It was sufficient to satisfy them that the man they had arrested was the man wanted for the Bombay Bank frauds. He was extradited, tried and sentenced to six years' imprisonment.

Similar frauds have occurred in Calcutta, among recent cases being one perpetrated in an Insurance Office in which withdrawal applications in the names of policy holders were forged; another by clerks in the Improvement Trust; and another in the Central Bank in which Rs 125,000 were involved. Yet another, the Bengal Luxmi Mills case, in which eight and a half lakhs of rupees were involved, led to the conviction of three prominent Bengali business men.

In every province of India the conditions of to-day and the temptations offered by the circumstances of modern com-

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mercial activities produce a similar crop of frauds of a kind unknown in ancient India.

Thus the C.I.D. of the United Provinces recently investigated a most clever and daring fraud by which a gang of criminals obtained Rs 43,000 from the Alliance Bank by means of forged invoices. The same C.I.D. dealt with the case against the Hindustan National Bank, which ended in conviction after proceedings lasting three years and involving the examination of 200 witnesses and 4,000 exhibits.

Sometimes the new and the old are strangely mingled, and time-honoured methods of playing the confidence trick are developed in a new setting.

A plausible rogue who was able to adapt his methods to modern conditions was Chattar Singh of the village of Sai in the Punjab. On the 19th April 1928 he appeared at the Sanatan Dharam High School at Rawalpindi in the guise of a well-dressed visitor and expressed his concern at the unfinished condition of the school buildings. He was informed that funds had run short. He then explained that he was Diwan Madan Mohan, a son of Rai Bahadur Daulat Ram, member of the Legislative Assembly and proprietor of the Krishna Cotton Mills at Ahmedabad. After examining the plans of the building he announced his intention of making a benefaction of a lac of rupees (£7,000) to enable it to be completed. He promised Rs 20,000 as a first instalment, and had a telegram despatched to Daulat Ram asking for a remittance of this amount to be sent by telegraphic order to the second master of the school through the Imperial Bank of India. He wrote a letter confirming his telegram while at the school. The headmaster was so pleased at this stroke of fortune that he announced the facts to the boys and spent Rs 96 on sweets, which he distributed in honour of the occasion.

The *soi-disant* millionaire was, however, unable to pay for a pair of shoes which he purchased that same evening, and obtained a loan from the second master for the purpose, saying that he had left his purse behind. Another local school,

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hearing of this philanthropist, sought to deserve his favourable regard, and his fame began to be noised abroad. The Police were not so impressed as the school authorities, and started to make embarrassing inquiries. The 'Diwan' incautiously mentioned the name of a local Sardar as an old acquaintance. When the Sardar Sahib unfortunately appeared, he exposed the cheat, whose real identity was soon established.

In November 1927 three men came to the house of a woman named Bhangari in the village of Gavadtikop in the District of Kanara, and asked for lodgings. They were accommodated; and soon one of them, who was an old man, told Bhangari that her house was enchanted and that within three months someone in the house would die in consequence. He persuaded her that, in order to prevent such a calamity from befalling, she must stave it off by worshipping a sum of money. He advised her that the amount should be Rs 400, and that it should be worshipped for eleven days. The next day her father, influenced by this appeal to the religious ideas current in the country, produced the money. It is suitable, according to the ideas of the Hindus, that a trader should worship his account books, a gardener his tools, and so on. At least that is how the idea is commonly expressed, but scholars and pandits clothe the matter in words somewhat differently. Rudragouda, the father of Bhangari, gave the old traveller gold and notes worth the sum he had named. A hole was then dug in the mud floor of one of the rooms of the house. The old man placed some green plantain leaves in the hole and sprinkled red powder round it. Then he buried the gold and the notes, reciting *mantras* as charms the while, and went out, locking the door. He kept the key. During the night he said that the *puja* (worship) should be performed, and entered the room for the purpose followed by Bhangari and Rudragouda. After a time he asked them to go and prepare some boiled rice as an offering to the god. So they went and boiled the rice and brought it to the old man, and he poured it into the hole.

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This done they slept. A few days later the old man said they must go to Sirsi, the neighbouring market town, to get some 'medicine' for further puja. He set out at once, accompanied by Rudragouda and his two companions. As they left their luggage behind, there was no reason for Bhangari or her father to feel that they contemplated any other course but to stay with them until the puja was successfully accomplished, as the old man had promised. In Sirsi, when they all left him in connexion with the purchase of the materials, telling him to meet them at a certain place, no thought of suspicion crossed the mind of Rudragouda. He waited at the appointed place for two hours before it occurred to him that there was something wrong. Then he went home, and entered the room where the valuables had been buried, only to find that they had been removed; and the luggage left by the strangers contained nothing but rubbish. Then Rudragouda went and told the Police about it, and they managed to find two of the sophisticated strangers who had mocked at the religious feelings of honest folk.

How far this kind of levity in religious matters can be carried by the materialists in this dark age is proved by the theft of idols which caused great consternation among the Hindu community of Ahmedabad in 1927. When a number of these exquisitely carved images had been removed from various Hindu temples, great excitement prevailed, and it was generally believed that the thefts had some connexion with the prevailing Hindu-Muslim tension. The Police, however, found that a gang composed of both Hindus and Mahomedans was concerned, the actual thefts being committed by Hindus of the underworld. These sacrilegious people were despatching the idols to Bombay for shipment to America for sale as valuable curios.

There is a sect of Brahmins, known as the Jadua Brahmins, in Bengal, who have abandoned their calling as members of the priesthood, and, pretending to magic powers, cheat ignorant villagers. They will make them believe that a confederate shown to them under every circumstance of



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solemnity in the dead of night is Bhagwati, a goddess, who promises all good fortune to the dupe. The dupe is then easily persuaded to entrust all his silver to the Brahmin in the belief that it will be turned into gold.

This pretence of alchemy is, of course, no more modern than it is scientific, but it illustrates the credulity of the common people in whom the more sophisticated find an easy prey. Since currency notes have been in circulation, sharpers of this kind have invented a form of cheating in which the basic ideas are similar and the appeal is to credulity and cupidity combined. Year after year, the trick known as the 'note-doubling trick' is successfully played on men who ought to know better. Warnings in the Press and otherwise seem to be ineffective.

During March 1927 the Deputy Superintendent of Police in charge of the City of Ahmedabad learned that a blacksmith named Dahya Bhawan was working this time-worn trick with success, and that the people who had been duped were unwilling to come forward and admit their folly. The *modus operandi* is ridiculously simple. A note is tied up, with or without certain ceremonies, next to a sheet of blank paper. By sleight of hand another note of the same denomination is substituted for the paper, and the dupe is made to believe that this can be done to any extent. He then produces a number of valuable notes, and the procedure is repeated; but the 'duplicators' disappear or pretend that his notes have been destroyed by an acid through some mistake. The blacksmith was watched and was eventually caught in the act of performing the trick on a man from Baroda, with notes worth Rs 900 which he had obtained from him.

Another form of cheating, which has attracted men of good position, is that of defrauding Insurance Companies by means of arson. An instance of this was the case of the owner of a cotton-ginning factory in the Surat District. Through a succession of fires in 1919, 1925, and 1927, all of which had been classed as accidental, he had succeeded in recovering large sums of money from different Insurance Companies.



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In May 1928 another fire broke out in his factory, and he claimed Rs 15,000. The surveyors and assessors of the company at first accepted this as an accidental fire; but later a rival party alleged arson, and a police investigation was started. The factory-owner was a wealthy and influential man and he did everything possible to thwart the course of justice. It was finally proved that the fire was not accidental and he was sentenced to four years' imprisonment and a fine of Rs 4,000.

Europeans of different nationalities have been concerned in a number of crimes of a more or less sophisticated nature from time to time. These cases naturally occur most frequently in the great cities where Europeans are settled or are engaged in trade in large numbers. International crooks rarely make India the scene of their exploits, but occasionally ingenious frauds are perpetrated by shady characters from Britain, the Continent of Europe, America or Australia.

Unfortunately, in certain recent cases, in which international criminals from Paris have successfully cheated a number of Indian firms under the colour of bona-fide trading transactions, they have been enabled by their ingenuity to discover loopholes in the law and escape.

To deal with cases of this kind it is necessary for the Police in India to be in touch with Scotland Yard, which is readily effected, in a limited way, by correspondence. Officers of the Imperial Service on leave in England have also been enabled to learn the latest developments and to study the organization of the Metropolitan Police during recent years. They find a far more elaborate and far more costly machine than their own, and one not handicapped as they are by a legal system which constantly tips the balance against them. They find it dealing with many similar problems and with many far less intractable than their own. They find the actual detective work being performed by Superintendents and Inspectors, men of much the same intellectual calibre as, for instance, their own subordinates, the Superintendents and Inspectors of Bombay City; while their own opposite

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numbers are often military and naval officers with no police experience before they joined their appointments late in life. It is natural that they should generally experience a certain envy, and come to the conclusion that with the same money and material they could achieve a better organization than either the Metropolitan Police or the Indian Police as they exist at present.

A modern Police Force is a great and complicated machine, not a collection of individuals, nor, as has been said already, a collection of individual thief-catchers. It works as a whole; and it requires skilled administrative control by experienced officers who have made a lifelong study of police problems. Military experience tends to make a man unsuited, rather than otherwise, to control a Police Force, as it develops an entirely different mentality. It is inevitable that military officers should be prone to think in terms of military tactics and strategy, problems which are on a different plane from those of police.

In spite of this anachronism of military officers, and largely because of the remarkable legal system of England and the quality of English judges and juries, Scotland Yard is an institution unexcelled in efficiency and unequalled in performance anywhere in the world.

Under modern conditions very great improvements could be effected if there were closer touch between the police forces of the component parts of the British Commonwealth, and among others the Indian Police would stand to gain greatly by measures directed to this end.

Where the Indian Police have failed, they have failed through the defects of the legal system (a question which cannot be fully discussed in a book of this nature) and through the difficulty in obtaining sufficient funds for expansion at the critical period when the oncoming of new conditions made that expansion desirable on the most generous lines.

The most obvious instance of this lack of the power to expand is to be seen in the failure to develop the *modus*

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*operandi* system, which is now an essential part of the equipment of the Police in England. For some years now the various Provincial Police Forces have been struggling to introduce the system with insufficient means. The C.I.D. of a city like Bombay, where its utility is fully recognized by the responsible authorities, have been unable to provide for it solely on account of the lack of quite small sums. Without it the C.I.D. is seriously handicapped in its unending war against the thief, the burglar and the cheat. With it the efficiency of the department would be greatly increased, and it should lose the sense of being overwhelmed by the volume of these forms of crime.

The *raison d'être* of the C.I.D. is to deal with organized crime and with modern forms of crime. These are both beyond the powers of a Police Force organized on a purely local basis, that is to say on the basis of the Police Station, or the Police District, in India, or on that of the Borough and County in England.

While the development in criminal methods has been very rapid, the Indian Police have been quick, within the limits imposed by financial stringency, to readjust ideas and practice to changing conditions. It is natural that the lead in this direction should have been taken in this matter by the British Officer, both in virtue of his higher rank and of his far wider knowledge of modern life through his contacts with the outer world. At the same time the ranks of Indian Officers, which have always furnished many detectives of superlative excellence, contain a number of men who have shown great powers of adaptability as well as real insight in dealing with the problems of to-day.

The great detective must have a good general knowledge of the science of the day since the Police Force touches the life of the people at so many points. It is impossible for him to have a real and thorough knowledge of the many subjects of the specialist, which come into his work in a variety of ways. He must, therefore, have at his disposal the services and assistance of a number of experts: and this applies equally to

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the ordinary police-station officer, the maid-of-all-work, as to the specialist detective, the chef—and artist—of the Criminal Investigation Department.

With this in view every police officer of the rank of Sub-Inspector and upwards is taught the rudiments of medical jurisprudence. He must be aware, among other things, of the existence of the problems of sadistic vice. Without that knowledge certain crimes might exhibit phenomena which would remain a closed book to him. When forming an opinion concerning the highly complex psychological reactions involved in crimes into which such considerations enter, he must depend on the advice of medical experts. His own rudimentary knowledge is only sufficient to tell him the general nature of the problem and to indicate the points on which he should obtain advice.

For the purpose of dealing with crimes concerning the human body such as murder and sexual offences, and those concerning animals such as cattle-poisoning, the investigating officer has available for his assistance the skill and knowledge of the Sub-Assistant Surgeon at the Government Dispensary in every taluka, the Civil Surgeon at the headquarters of every District, the Anatomist at certain centres, the Chemical Analyser at the headquarters of every province, and a limited number of trained veterinary officers in each province. He is, however, required to supply to the medical officer all the information at his disposal concerning the medico-legal aspects of a case, and this presupposes and necessitates a certain knowledge of these matters. The question whether a post-mortem examination should be held or not is one for the Police, not for the medical officer to decide; and the question whether any parts of the body or any articles should be sent to the Chemical Analyser is similarly one for the Police.

Other experts whose scientific knowledge is at the disposal of the investigating officer are the Chief Inspector of Explosives and the Examiner of questioned Documents. The former is a military expert and the latter is attached to the

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office of the central Intelligence Bureau under the Government of India.

The functions of the Chief Inspector of Explosives are self-explanatory and his assistance is mostly, but not exclusively, required in connexion with revolutionary crime. The Examiner of questioned Documents is an expert in matters of forgery and handwriting. In view of the multiplicity of languages in India, it is fortunate that the practice of this science is unaffected by the language in which a suspected document may have been written. The expert requires lengthy extracts of the handwriting of the suspected person, and such details as the speed with which extracts made for test purposes were written, the type of pen used and the position of the writer, whether the paper was laid on a table or other flat surface, or held on the palm of the other hand or placed across the thigh. These latter positions, it should be explained, are commonly adopted by old-fashioned Indians—who are still very numerous, especially in rural areas. The opinion of this expert has not always been accepted without question by the Courts, which generally require independent corroborative evidence on the point at issue.

There are millions of people in India who cannot read or write, and when they wish to attest a document they do so by making their 'mark', as was the custom formerly in England. The mark they make is not a mere cross, but the mark of their thumb impression.

The scientific system of criminal identification by means of finger-prints was invented in India. It was brought to London by Sir Edward Henry, who had been Inspector-General of Police in Bengal and became Commissioner of Police in the Metropolis in 1903. (He was a member of the Indian Civil Service, not of the Indian Police, and was appointed to the post of Inspector-General in accordance with the custom which has fallen into disuse since the latter Service was reorganized at the end of last century.) He devised the system of classification, which is known by his

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name, and revolutionized the work of the Police throughout the world.

This system is so well known and has been described so often that it is not necessary to describe it again. It may be emphasized that it makes it impossible for a criminal, once his finger-prints have been recorded anywhere, ever to hide his identity from a police officer who is able to take them again. In this way it ensures that a criminal's past record can be considered by a Court when passing sentence. It also aids detection, because, if a criminal leaves a finger-print anywhere at the scene of a crime or on any article which is proved to have been used in connexion with a crime and his finger-prints are already on record, his identity is at once known to the Police, and they also obtain infallible proof of his connexion with the crime.

There is a finger-print bureau under the control of the Deputy Inspector-General of Police in charge of the C.I.D. in each province. The staffs of these bureaux attain to a high degree of skill. They are able to identify the print of a single finger or thumb with absolute certainty, if it is clear, and can even do so sometimes if it is partly obliterated. In some provinces they are drawn from the ranks of the Police, in others they are recruited direct as a separate cadre. They are all Indians. Some of them have succeeded in devising improvements in the system of keeping the records and in methods of identification, notably in connexion with single prints.

The number of prints on record in the larger provinces is between 150,000 and 200,000. In the Bombay Presidency there are three bureaux: one at Poona for the District Police, one at Bombay for the City Police, and one at Karachi for the Sind Police. The other provinces have one each.

The letters, papers and prints which come into the bureau give a very good idea of what the Police of the province are doing every day. The working of the bureau at Poona may be briefly considered as an example. This bureau receives the slips of every person arrested in the districts of the presi-



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dency as well as those arrested in Bombay City. The investigating officer who makes the arrest wants to know whether his man has any previous criminal history and, if so, for what crimes he has been convicted and where. Now that crime records showing the full history of the crimes committed by habituals, with details as to their *modus operandi*, and associates are being prepared, he wants to know whether he is fortunate enough to have caught a man concerning whom all this useful information is on record and readily available. If it is, it may enable him to find out the names of associates in the particular crime he is investigating, and, perhaps, to find the receiver of stolen property and so to recover some of it. The bureau also receives the slips of persons arrested in neighbouring Indian States and in other provinces when there is reason to suppose that the person arrested may have been a resident in its territory.

In this way the Poona Bureau receives on the average 100 slips on every working day. It has 130,000 slips on record, and its experts can classify a new slip in a few minutes and discover whether it is already on record among the 130,000 in a few minutes more.

Whenever a criminal resident in its jurisdiction is convicted, it again receives the slips for record, and these average thirty-five a day. Contrary to the experience in England, where the majority of persons convicted (nearly two out of three) have previous convictions, only one in four or one in five of the persons convicted here have been convicted before. As the same proportion as that found in England is, according to Forsdick (*European Police Systems*, by R. S. Forsdick), found in nearly every other country in Europe, this difference must indicate a profound difference in the essentials of the problems of police and crime between Europe and the Bombay Presidency. The question is too large for solution here.

Among the 100 slips which come up for identification, or, as it is technically called, 'forsearch', on any given day, there may be one from the fingers of an unidentified dead body



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found on the seashore off Kanara. The police officer holding the inquest—and inquests are held by police officers in rural India—thinks that it is that of a member of a criminal tribe who has been murdered. The bureau will be able to tell him that it is that of a certain Waddar who has been registered under the Criminal Tribes Act. He will then be able to commence his investigation by getting into touch with the Waddars related to the dead man, who may be fifty miles or more away, being habitual wanderers. In this way the bureau makes it possible to detect a murder which would have otherwise remained undetected owing to the identity of the corpse remaining unestablished.

Other slips received from Khandesh will, after being sent to the United Provinces Bureau for identification, enable the bureau to tell the Police in Khandesh that a gang of Dehliwala Bauriahs has been arrested by them disguised as Sadhus. Others will tell that well-known coiners from Gujerat are exploiting the Southern Maratha country, and this information communicated to the Deputy Inspector-General may lead to a sub-inspector of the C.I.D. being deputed to make local inquiries in virtue of the fact that he knows the men and their methods. Again, other slips may show that a well-known burglar from Ahmedabad has been arrested in the Central Provinces; that a Pathan rifle-thief has been caught near the lines of the Regiment at Ahmedabad; that a notorious railway thief from Poona has been arrested in East Africa, and so on. Occasionally blood-stained prints will be received on the blade of a knife or some other article at the scene of a murder, or a photograph of the print suspected to have been left on a window-pane by a burglar.

Experts of this bureau are called to give evidence in the Courts in, perhaps, 70 or 80 cases in a year. A case which occurred recently in Bombay, and was known as the 'Musjid Bandar murder case', was remarkable in that a brass pot was found at the scene of the murder, which bore a blood print, not of a finger, but of the palm of a hand. This palm-print

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was photographed and compared with the palm-prints of the suspects in the case. It was found to tally with that of the principal accused in the case. Enlargements were made from both the print on the pot and the print of the accused, and an expert went into Court and testified as to their identity, explaining to the Court, from the enlargements, how the papillary lines had so many points of agreement and, in fact, coincided, as to leave no doubt on the point. The defence strenuously objected to the admissibility of this evidence, and although the case was the first of its kind on record in the Bombay Presidency, the Judge held the evidence to be admissible. It went a long way towards convincing the jury of the guilt of the accused.

The Indian Police, as we have seen, are only now beginning to obtain the assistance of such aids to detection as Major Atcherley's *modus operandi* system and the records of criminals and their methods which it entails. They have never had anything like the elaborate crime indexes which have been long in vogue on the Continent of Europe, or the manifold registers developed in such detail by the Police of Berlin and Vienna. They have, of course, nothing remotely resembling the 'Meldewesen' system of Germany, under which a record was kept of every citizen, who had to inform the Police of his movements, and, on arrival at a strange town on a business visit, had to report his arrival to the local police within twenty-four hours, giving every sort of detail concerning his name, age, birthplace, business, former residence and civil state. Under these circumstances it will be readily understood that nothing has been done in India on the lines of the work of Hans Gross and others at the Universities of Graz, Lausanne and Rome, where chairs have been established and criminal laboratories set up for the benefit of future lawyers, magistrates and police officers.

A small start has been made in the way of work in this direction in the Bengal C.I.D. in connexion with revolutionary crime, and in the laboratory of the C.I.D. of the United Provinces.

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Individual officers, both British and Indian, have made use of scientific knowledge in the detection of crime, when occasion offered. Such cases are rare. The typical crimes which engage the attention of investigating officers at the police stations spread over the whole of British India are those arising from natural conditions among the peasantry. They are the result of the reaction of primitive and unbridled passions, such as revenge and lust; or of the spirit of adventure diverted into unhealthy channels; or of ignorance, credulity, superstition and a misdirected cunning. They do not, as a rule, lend themselves to scientific treatment; but, if scientific knowledge were more widely diffused and more easily available to the investigating officer, it would, of course, be used to a greater extent than is possible at present. It should be the object of the highest police authorities to achieve the development and extension of such methods. Had the direction and control remained in British hands, this would undoubtedly have been gradually accomplished; but with the rapid transition to self-government and the diminution of British control and British personnel now contemplated, it will depend on many incalculable factors. Of these the most germane to this issue arises from the question of the extent to which scientific knowledge will be acquired and diffused in India in the near future.

Ordinarily the C.I.D.'s in India have dealt with cases too involved or difficult for the local police, and with organized crime and that which has ramifications in several districts. To enable them to do this they are kept closely informed by District Superintendents of such crime as (1) murder for gain or of a mysterious nature, (2) dacoities which appear to be the work of organized gangs or those operating over wide areas, (3) administering poison or drugs for gain, (4) cheating by professional cheats, (5) counterfeiting, (6) forgery and (7) fraudulent company promoting, bank frauds, insurance frauds and other modern crime, if important.

When a C.I.D. officer is deputed to make special inquiries into an outbreak of any form of crime or into an individual

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crime in a District, he is ordinarily required to report to the District Superintendent, who, if necessary, details other officers to assist him. In this way a satisfactory degree of co-operation is secured whenever it is desirable.

The position of the C.I.D. in a city is somewhat different. In Bombay, for instance, co-operation is secured by the fact that the Deputy Commissioner in charge of the C.I.D. has the power to supervise and control all investigations in each of the eighteen police stations of the city, and may direct that any investigation shall be made by a local officer or by a C.I.D. officer, or may direct one to assist the other.

C.I.D. officers are selected for their special knowledge and abilities, and, when deputed to investigate a case, have the advantage of being able to devote their whole time to it, whereas the police-station staff are always preoccupied and distracted by numerous other calls and by routine duty. They have, therefore, reason to welcome the relief afforded by heavy and intricate cases being taken off their hands.

In brief, the advantages of both the centralized and decentralized detective systems have been secured, as far as possible within the limits set by the general conditions, as a result of the co-ordinating influences of the great Imperial Service and the *esprit de corps* which its members have fostered among themselves and among their subordinate officers.

## CHAPTER XII

### POLITICAL CRIME AND DISORDER

**I**T CANNOT be too often repeated that every official act of every police officer is governed by the law of the land. As a corollary the Police are not concerned with politics which are the affair of the legislatures and the executive governments as the centre of the political life of the State. The only function of the Police is to enforce the law as promulgated by the proper authority.

It follows that we are not here concerned with the growth of Indian nationalism or any other phase of Indian politics, except where, as sometimes happens, they develop an illegal fringe. This has happened in most countries in recent times, one of the few exceptions being Great Britain, where illegal activities are repugnant to the national character and to the highly developed constitutional system.

Illegal activities in India have taken two forms—secret conspiracies to commit murder or dacoity, and grave public disorders. The extremist politicians captured the Congress, originally a moderate or liberal organization; and some of these Congress extremists were not unconnected with the terrorist conspiracies and incitement to riot. Sometimes politicians, without indulging in direct incitement to riot, have yet deliberately helped to create an atmosphere favourable to mass disorders. Activities of this kind are necessarily matters of anxious concern to Governments, and matters which they must watch closely through the agency of the officers responsible for the maintenance of order in different localities. Failure to recognize this obvious fact has sometimes led politicians who do not indulge in illegal activities to resent the interest taken by the Police in those who do so or are reasonably suspected of doing so.

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The terrorist conspirators in India drew their inspiration from the secret societies of European countries. Their recruits have generally been drawn from the classes educated in English, and sometimes from those who have studied in Europe. In the early stages they received literature, organizational schemes and even weapons through Indians in London and Paris. They have always been very few in number, except in the sense that their propaganda has, as in the case of the attempted rising in the Punjab in February 1915, roused wider circles to take part in disorders.

The first revolutionary crime in India was the murder of two British officials in Poona in 1897. The two murderers were convicted and hanged. Two of their associates who murdered two brothers because they had given information leading to the arrest and execution of the first murderers, were in turn convicted and executed.

The Press in India has always been prone to adopt a tone of hostility towards the British Government. The paper owned and edited by B. G. Tilak in Poona had contained articles which had an evident connexion with the other signs of incipient revolutionary crime. He was prosecuted and convicted for exciting disaffection towards the Government in articles published just before the murders.

The Hindu-Muslim riots of 1893 had led to the development of a movement, in which Tilak had played a leading part, designed to stimulate Hindu enthusiasm and their hatred of Mahomedans, of foreigners generally and of the British Government. In this connexion public festivals were started in honour of Ganpati, the elephant-headed god of wisdom and success; and others were inaugurated in honour of Shivaji, the prince who had led the revolt against the Moghul domination in the seventeenth century and established the Maratha power. Tilak's articles in 1897 were based on this 'Shivaji cult' and were capable of being interpreted as advocating violence and revolt.

In 1908 he was again prosecuted for articles concerning the use of the bomb and comments on the death of two Eng-

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lish ladies as a result of a bomb explosion in Bengal which was intended to kill an English Magistrate. The serious rioting of that year in Bombay on his conviction was the result of agitation among the millhands of the city by his followers.

In 1909 Mr. Jackson, the District Magistrate of Nasik in the Bombay Presidency, was murdered. The murderers of Mr. Jackson and twenty-seven other conspirators were convicted as a result of investigations made by the C.I.D. at Poona under Mr. Guider. This and the removal of Tilak marked the end of revolutionary crime in Western India. The enlightened views of political leaders and thinkers like Gokhale and Ranade were effective to counteract the evil influences of criminal teaching. Through the Servants of India Society and in other ways they opened more healthy avenues of political and nationalist development.

The conspirators convicted in connexion with the murder of Mr. Jackson were linked, through Indians in London, with those who were responsible for the murder of Sir William Curzon-Wyllie at the Imperial Institute.

On the other side of India nationalist sentiment had been evoked in opposition to the partition of Bengal. This partition had been arranged, before there was any suggestion of nationalist sentiment being in any way involved, on the ground that the Province of Bengal had become too unwieldy for administration as a single unit. When the partition was annulled in response to the agitation, but after a delay of some years, Bihar was removed from the area administered by the Government of Bengal and joined to Orissa to form a new provincial unit. In the meanwhile the anti-partitionists developed an intense form of agitation which appealed to the Hindus but excited opposition among the Mahomedans of the new province of Eastern Bengal who wished that unit, where they had a majority, to remain undisturbed.

Many of the methods adopted in the course of the agitation were borrowed from Europe—boycott, sentiment, and finally political assassination. The terrorist organization was based on the model of Russian revolutionary societies. It



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was divided into groups, the members of which were kept in ignorance of the other groups and their doings. The chief organizers were required to keep aloof from acts of violence, lest they should run the risk of being inculpated and the organization should be endangered in consequence. Oaths of secrecy were to be enforced by exacting the death penalty against those who broke them. With this object in view, some of those who gave evidence against their associates were later assassinated.

At first these secret societies made little headway, but once murders and dacoities had been successfully carried out—from 1907 onwards—they gathered impetus swiftly.

The whole conception was so foreign to Bengal that Indians who heard of the first outrages could scarcely credit the reports. The Government showed great reluctance to take action except under the ordinary law in spite of the great difficulties of obtaining evidence sufficient to secure convictions in many instances.

Between 1907 and 1917 the revolutionary party in Bengal were responsible for 210 outrages and 101 attempts to commit such outrages. The Police had definite information of the complicity of no less than 1,038 persons in these offences, but they had only been able to obtain convictions against eighty-four of them for specific offences, against sixty-three on charges of conspiracy, and against fifty-eight in connexion with the illegal possession of arms and explosives. During this same period twenty police officers were murdered. All of them were Indians, and most of them were Hindus of Bengal.

Dacoities were committed chiefly in order to obtain funds to finance the revolutionary party. The dacoits often displayed the most callous disregard for human life, butchering inoffensive householders and their servants and firing volleys into crowds of villagers. A typical case was the Armenian Street dacoity in Calcutta. On the 17th May 1917 at about 9 p.m. two young Bengalis entered a goldsmith's shop and asked to see some jewellery. Four more young Bengalis entered almost immediately afterwards and began to fire

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wildly with pistols. Two brothers of the owner who were in the shop at the time fell mortally wounded. An assistant and another servant were also wounded. A Mahomedan and others escaped, and the dacoits finally made off with jewellery worth about Rs 5,400. One of their number had been badly wounded in the abdomen and was taken away in a taxi-cab. After going some distance, his comrades took him out of the cab at a lonely place and shot him dead.

The callousness of the revolutionaries is further illustrated by a crime like that of the assassination of Jatindra Mohan Ghosh, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, as he sat at the door of his house with his little child on his knee in the evening. Four or five youths came up and opened fire, killing both the officer and his child. It was believed that the only reason for singling him out was that it had been rumoured that he was about to direct the preparation of a conspiracy case.

Perhaps the most important and at the same time a most revolting feature of the movement was the manner in which recruits were obtained for work of this kind. The recruits were generally obtained from the schools and colleges of Bengal. It was usually effected in the first instance by means of personal friendships. Play was then made with ideas of 'liberty' and such sentiments as make an impression on youthful minds. The lives of Garibaldi, Mazzini, Washington and others were craftily used for this purpose by clever and designing persons, who then tempted their immature and confiding associates to join a great organization as the best way to serve their country. At first these youths were employed only as messengers. Gradually and with infinite subtlety and cunning they were drawn into the more important work and enmeshed in the net. Once thoroughly involved in it, they found it impossible to escape from the organization or to give up their connexion with it. With devilish persistence they were more and more deeply involved, degraded, brutalized, taught to kill—even to kill a Brahmin, than which there is no greater sin.

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To save the youth of the country from this life of horror, which separated brother from brother, pupil from teacher, child from parent, surely justified a great effort and measures which looked to results rather than to the niceties of legal procedure.

Though the motives for these crimes were represented to be based on patriotism and religion, they were never such as to appeal to any but a small minority of the people of Bengal. Many of the immature youths who were won over by the propaganda changed their views when given time for reflection away from the sinister influences which had won them over to the revolutionary cause. An important factor favouring the spread of revolutionary doctrines was the economic stress among the educated middle classes of Bengal. The educational system turned out hundreds of young men qualified for posts as clerks, lawyers, schoolmasters or journalists, who had no prospects of making a reasonably good living. Once they had acquired qualifications of this kind, they were unwilling or unfitted to work in any other capacity. This economic stress and propaganda based on perverted patriotism and perverted religion were the mainsprings of the revolutionary movement.

This propaganda of the revolutionary party in Bengal had not only led to dacoities and murders in their own province, but it had also penetrated to the neighbouring provinces, Bihar and Orissa, the United Provinces and Madras. It failed to secure any important results beyond isolated crimes or temporary disorders.

In the Punjab there was considerable unrest in 1907, which was diagnosed by Mr. Morley, then Secretary of State, as being due to political agitation. It was met by the deportation of two of the leading agitators, after which the province was quiet for some years. The life of the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, was attempted at Delhi in 1912, and an Indian orderly was murdered by a bomb in Lahore in 1913. Four of the conspirators were hanged in connexion with this last outrage.

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A Punjabi student named Hardayal went to America and, according to the case for the prosecution in a trial at San Francisco in 1917, plotted with German agents, founded the *Ghadr* (mutiny) party among Indians in California, and, long before the War, spread the idea that Germany would strike England.

When the War broke out, large numbers of Indians, especially Sikh peasants of an ignorant type, who had been impregnated with the Ghadr teaching, returned to the Punjab and took part in a formidable and dangerous movement in the course of which many outrages were committed. This movement was countered by the efforts of the Police and of the leading Sikhs, greatly assisted by the special powers conferred by the 'Defence of India Act', analogous to the D.O.R.A. of England. Of the Police the Governor said that they remained as ever true to their salt, and of the Sikhs generally that the gallant behaviour of the Sikh Regiments at the front had done much to restore the *amour propre* of the community, which had been apprehensive that its good name would suffer from the crimes of the returned emigrants. When these latter committed outrages, the country people turned out to hunt them down, and advisory committees of Sikhs exercised a strong influence on the side of law and order. At the same time the small Sikh nation contributed a larger proportion to the armies in the field than any other people in India. This was their answer to revolutionary intrigues inspired by the enemy. In other respects the Germans showed themselves to be ill informed of the Indian movements of which they wished to take advantage in order to strike at England.

In 1915 German agents in Batavia, who were in touch with a Bengal revolutionary to whom they had been introduced for the purpose by the German Consul at that place, remitted Rs 33,000 to the revolutionary party in Bengal. They planned to send arms and German officers to assist a rising. All these plans came to nothing.

The plan which, in pursuance of the general intention of

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the Indian revolutionaries and their German allies, came nearest to success was that made by a Bengali, Rash Bihari, and a Maratha Brahmin, V. G. Pingle, to bring about a general rising and a mutiny of the troops in Northern India in February 1915. The Ghadr party and the Bengali revolutionaries were in the plot, which has been described in detail by Sir Michael O'Dwyer and in the report of the Rowlatt Commission. The authorities received information of the intentions of the conspirators, and Mr. Tomkins of the Punjab C.I.D. and other police officers searched their headquarters the day before the rising was to have taken place. Several of them were arrested with a quantity of incriminating material, and the authorities all over the country were warned in time to take the necessary steps. In some cases the Indian troops captured the men who came to seduce them, but a few isolated units were disaffected. The Punjab Police obtained evidence which led to the successful prosecution of the three Lahore Conspiracy cases; and disclosed all the details of these plans, their ramifications and the German measures to support the revolutionaries in India.

Pingle, who had come from America in connexion with the conspiracy, was caught and hanged, but Rash Bihari escaped. The latter had successfully evaded the Police for some years. He had been Head Clerk at the Forest Research Institute at Dehra Dun, and had been closely connected with the gang who were prosecuted in the Delhi conspiracy case, in which four of his associates were hanged, and the evidence suggested that they had been concerned in the attempt on the life of Lord Hardinge.

As soon as a serious situation developed in the Punjab, Sir Michael O'Dwyer had pressed for special legislation in the shape of the Defence of India Act to enable the authorities to control the situation. The special powers of censorship, search and arrest conferred by this wartime legislation enabled the Police to obtain information far more easily and successfully than had been possible under the ordinary law.

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At the same time the special tribunals constituted to deal with the cases of persons thus arrested ensured the detention of the guilty to a far greater extent than was the case with persons prosecuted in the courts in strict accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act. Not only were all the plans of the foreign enemy revealed but the plots of the revolutionaries within the gate were defeated.

After the murder of another Deputy Superintendent of Police, Basanta Chatarji, in June 1916 the authorities in Bengal availed themselves in a more thorough-going manner of the opportunity to meet the menace in that province by the use of these special powers whose efficacy had been proved in the Punjab. As a result the outrages soon became progressively less numerous. Arrests and searches combined with detention after inquiry by the special tribunals virtually brought the revolutionary movement to a standstill. Thus by an abrogation of the ordinary law the Police were empowered to effect their elementary duty of bringing offenders to justice. It is worth while to recall that the paramount importance of this duty is emphasized in the ancient Hindu Law of punishment, one of the 'Laws of Manu'.

Having found a solution of the difficulty of dealing with political murder and the conspiracies which were responsible for such crimes, the authorities were bound to consider whether and how far the temporary legislation which had unexpectedly provided this solution should be placed on a permanent footing. It was, therefore, decided that the whole question should be made the subject of an inquiry by eminent judicial authorities.

With the approval of the Secretary of State, the Governor-General appointed a Committee in 1918 to investigate and report on the nature and extent of the revolutionary movement in India; to examine and consider the difficulties that had arisen in dealing with such conspiracies; and to advise as to the legislation, if any, necessary to enable the Government to deal effectively with them.



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Mr. Justice Rowlatt of the King's Bench Division of His Majesty's High Court of Justice served as President of the Committee, and the report has, in consequence, been known by his name. There were four other members, two British and two Indian.

This almost exclusively judicial and legal body examined all the available evidence concerning all the conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement. They came to the conclusion that all these plots had been directed towards a single objective, the overthrow by force of British rule in India. They showed why codes and procedure devised in less difficult times failed to meet the necessities of the situation created by some of the conspiracies. They found that they had all been successfully encountered with the support of Indian loyalty. Their inquiries also showed very clearly, though they did not emphasize the point, that the brunt of the attack had, especially in Bengal, fallen on Indian officers in the Police, and that these officers, so far from evincing any sympathy with the revolutionaries, had counter-attacked with all the means at their disposal. A truth which has been to a great extent obscured by much of the political writing of recent years is that the administration in India has always been overwhelmingly Indian in composition. It has, in consequence, been essentially Indian in spirit and outlook, subject to the modifying influences of a British system of law, a handful of British officers, and political ideas derived from Europe. The immense numbers of Indians in all branches of the administration exercised and realized their responsibilities in connexion with the functions of government. In particular, the Indian officers in the Police were, and are, popularly known as an essential part of the 'Sirkar'. They feel themselves to be so; and, in spite of everything which has been said to the contrary, they are in the habit of working in co-operation with all the most stable elements among the people for the suppression of crime and disorder. They are themselves 'of the people' and they are the guardians of the people, protecting them from the ever-present menace of



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the extortioner and the robber, as well as being the agents of a strong central 'Sirkar'. As a corollary, they became the natural enemies of revolutionaries, whose ideas are based on perverted patriotism and perverted religion.

The Rowlatt Committee were convinced that the ordinary machinery had failed to deal with revolutionary crime in Bengal. They were evidently impressed by the fact that there had been ninety-one political dacoities, sixteen of them accompanied by murder, and fourteen other murders, eight of them being of police officers, in that province in the space of about ten years, for which it had not been possible to put anyone on trial. They ascribed this failure to a variety of reasons. There were the paucity of police and the geographical or topographical facilities enjoyed by these criminals in common with the ordinary dacoit. The main difficulties were clearly of a legal nature. The ordinary difficulties of obtaining evidence in India had been enhanced by terrorism.

The ordinary legal difficulties were such as those arising from the difficulty of proving the illegal possession of arms where premises were occupied under the joint family system, the fact that in practice evidence as to identity had to be overwhelming, and the feeling which seemed to pervade these trials that there was but a slight presumption that a witness was telling the truth.

The Committee considered that in many of the cases where no one had been brought to justice the information showed beyond any reasonable moral doubt at least some of the guilty parties, but they recognized that, even so, a prosecution would probably fail.

They pointed out that, since confessions made to the Police in India were not evidence, it followed that the facts were often told to them because they could not be proved. The Committee instanced the Armenian Street dacoity in which several of the criminals and their accomplices made statements explaining all the main facts of the occurrence, but there was no untainted evidence. They similarly pointed

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out that in the case of the murder of Deputy Superintendent Basanta Chatarji on the 30th June 1916, each of five persons arrested at different times implicated himself and the four others, but there was still no evidence to justify a prosecution, although there was a good deal of concurrent information.

This officer and his orderly were cycling along a road on one side of which a crowd of Bengali youths were playing football. Five youths armed with pistols opened fire on them. The Deputy Superintendent was shot dead and the orderly received wounds of which he died in hospital. The latter was the only witness who said that he could identify any of the assailants. The general statements of individuals arrested in Bengal shortly after the outrage showed clearly that it was the work of the Dacca Samiti, without however indicating the particular persons responsible for it.

The Dacca Samiti was one of the most dangerous organizations in Bengal. Like the others, it had been developed according to the well-known Russian revolutionary methods.

The Rowlatt Committee said that but for the wartime measures the difficulties in Bengal would have been grave indeed; and they recommended that similar special powers and special procedure should be made permanent by legislation. To this proposal they added an important limiting condition. It was that no such powers should be exercised anywhere by anyone unless and until the Governor-General-in-Council declared by a notification that an emergency necessitating their use had arisen. They recommended that internments should be either a mere restriction of movements to a limited area or a complete temporary deprivation of liberty, as the revolutionaries differed widely in character. Some only required to be kept from evil associations, and others were irreconcilable and desperate men.

The reason advanced by the Committee for proposing special tribunals was that the remarkable length of trials in India increased the opportunities for terrorism. Cases involving a number of persons on a charge of conspiracy were

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necessarily long, but they were protracted by the multitude of points taken and by the cross-examination upon every sort of collateral matter of every witness, however unimportant, to a degree unknown in England.

The report of the Committee was published in 1918. The War came to an end, and special legislation on the lines it had recommended was introduced. In the meantime the Montagu-Chelmsford report had also been published and had made known the intentions of the British Government to develop the already free institutions of India, by successive stages, to a system of autonomous responsible government.

In spite of all the facts, agitation was started against the 'Rowlatt Bills'. They were denounced as 'Black Bills', which 'blocked all progress'. The agitation soon became virulent, and when the Congress party threatened civil disobedience, reasonable Indian opinion parted company with them. The Congress went on to hartals and the inevitable disorder accompanying mass agitation on excited and violently anti-Government lines. The matter passed beyond the scope of police measures.

Gandhi played a leading part in this agitation in 1919, when he professed his belief in his method of passive resistance, which he termed 'Satyagriha', translated by him as 'soul-force'. When the inevitable rioting and bloodshed followed from the agitation, he called it off, expressing his surprise that the masses were not able to engage in the movement without violence. The sincerity of his belief in 'non-violent' methods was not questioned, but the ultimate logical consequences of his opposition to the Rowlatt Act would have been to prevent the Police from controlling a murderous and revolutionary conspiracy.

The next step taken by the Congress extremists under Gandhi's leadership was to establish 'Hindu-Muslim unity', for which the chief basis was the discontent among Muslims on account of the Khilafat question. The majority of the Muslims, however, stood aloof. The agitation continued in

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1920, 1921 and 1922 under the labels of 'non-violent Non-Co-operation' and 'Swaraj, the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs'. In other words it appealed to political, religious and racial feelings.

Again the inevitable happened, and in the course of the disorders policemen were murdered by frenzied mobs at Chauri Chaura, Malegaon and elsewhere. At Malegaon, in the Bombay Presidency, a sub-inspector, who attempted to deal with disorder with an inadequate force, was murdered by the mob. At Chauri Chaura several policemen were overwhelmed and burned to death or butchered. At Firozpur Jhirka a young constable named Majidsingh took the lead and by his example inspired his comrades and other government servants to beat off an attack on the court buildings by gunfire and prevented a massacre.

Throughout this period police officers were constantly being placed in perilous situations in one part of India or another. The news of the appalling massacre at Chauri Chaura induced Gandhi to call the movement off again. He was arrested and tried shortly afterwards and the agitation subsided.

The ruling chiefs, the landed classes, the Army and the Police had remained steadfastly loyal through all these trying years. Apart from the subsidiary part played by the Khilafatists, who never represented the bulk of the Mahomedans, the movement was almost entirely confined to the Hindu extremists of the educated classes. During the worst of the disorders Indians of all classes assisted the authorities, in much the same way as Sir Michael O'Dwyer said of the Sikhs, 'Sikh gentlemen, Sikh soldiers, and Sikh peasants, at the risk of their lives, saved European ladies who had been attacked, conducted to places of safety others who had been in danger, and rescued wounded British soldiers from the roused fury of the mob.'

A Sikh movement outside the main current of nationalist political agitation also led to crime and disorder. This was the Babbar Akali movement, which developed out of the

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Akali movement, originally a purely religious and reformative one.

The Akali movement first came into prominence through the almost incredible massacre of 130 Akali reformers by a Hindu mahant or abbot in charge of a shrine which they entered, as he believed, to seize it with the rich revenues attached to it.

In a very short time the fanaticism of the Akalis was directed against the Government by being diverted into a movement inspired by a desire to re-establish Sikh rule in the Punjab. In July 1922 the Babbar Akali Jatha was formed for the purpose of assassinating village officials and others known to be loyal to the Government.

A series of brutal outrages was committed in pursuance of this object. The countryside was terrorized, and, even when not in sympathy with the Babbar Akalis, people gave the authorities and the Police no help. In spite of early signs of this growing lawlessness, 2,000 additional police had been disbanded for reasons of economy, but by the middle of 1923 it became evident that they must be re-enrolled. Their disbandment had only aggravated the trouble. The Babbar Akali gang even dared to issue cyclostyled leaflets boasting of the crimes committed by its members to overawe the loyal landowners and village servants. The list was a long one, including many cases of bomb-throwing, in one of which two British soldiers had been hit. The Non-Co-operation movement and the Akali propaganda of the previous two years had seriously undermined the loyalty of the countryside, and the assistance which had been rendered against the Ghadr conspirators, and, in 1919, was no longer forthcoming so readily from the stable elements among the Sikhs.

While the additional police were being enrolled, detachments of cavalry were placed at the disposal of the civil power, and it was decided that the C.I.D. should undertake the preparation of a conspiracy case against the Akalis.

On the 23rd September 1923 Mr. Smith of the Imperial

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Service, while on duty in the C.I.D. in this connexion, learned that five members of the Babbar Akali Jatha were in a village in the Kapurthala State. They were known to be in possession of firearms and bombs. Mr. Smith promptly moved out with a force of cavalry and police, and surrounded the village. One of the gang surrendered, but the other four broke through the cordon, firing in all directions. Mr. Smith advanced on them alone and called on them to surrender. In response they fired at him and flung a bomb which narrowly missed him but fortunately did not explode. Some of the cavalry then came up in support and the four men were driven back and eventually shot.

In October of the same year Mr. Horton, District Superintendent of Police, Hoshiarpur, and Mr. Jenkins, the Assistant Superintendent, with a mixed party of additional police, special police and regular police, skilfully rounded up one Dhanna Singh, known to be one of the most dangerous of the gang, and succeeded in depriving him of a loaded revolver. He was handcuffed without any loss being sustained; but then this desperate man contrived to explode a Mills bomb, and perhaps a country-made bomb, which were concealed on his person.

He was himself instantly killed; and so were Mr. Horton, a Sikh Sub-Inspector, Gulzara Singh, and three other policemen. Two more died of their wounds. Mr. Jenkins was also seriously wounded.

In the face of such desperate deeds, the action of another District Superintendent of Police, Mr. De Gale, received special commendation, when he tackled Wariam Singh, one of the last of the Babbar Akalis, single-handed. Wariam Singh made a dash for liberty, armed with a sword. Mr. De Gale pursued and overtook him. In the struggle which then ensued, Mr. De Gale, who had fired all six rounds from his revolver in the pursuit, slipped and fell. Wariam Singh cut at him with his sword, severely wounding him in the forearm, before he was shot.

In a short time the C.I.D. had prepared a case against



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eighty of the Babbar Akalis, and commenced another. The arrest of the eighty had an overwhelming effect, but the trouble was not entirely stamped out for many months.

As the position gradually improved in the Punjab, it deteriorated in Bengal. After an almost complete absence of revolutionary crime for some years in the latter province, there was a serious recrudescence of it in 1924. Mr. Day, a private gentleman, was murdered in mistake for the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Tegart. A sub-inspector was murdered. A bomb factory was discovered at Maniktala, and arms and explosives were found in other places. A bomb was thrown into a shop in Mirzapur Street with serious results. One Santilal was arrested and tried in this connexion. He was acquitted, and after his acquittal he was murdered. Many dacoities were committed by people of the *bhadralog* (educated) class, and one, at least, was attributed to the revolutionary party. An attempt to bring certain of the conspirators to book in the Alipur Conspiracy case failed chiefly owing to the general atmosphere of intimidation and to the fact that much of the evidence in the possession of the Police could not be placed before the Court without danger to the lives of those who had furnished it.

In these circumstances action was taken under a Regulation to imprison some of the most dangerous conspirators without trial. A Bill was placed before the Legislative Council of Bengal to enable action to be taken on the same general lines as had been proposed by the Rowlatt Committee, but it was not passed. Ordinances were then issued on the same lines, and some eighty persons were immediately arrested. As a consequence of this and further action, revolutionary crime practically ceased for four years. By 1929 the number of persons under detention had fallen from the 150 of 1926 to a bare 32. In 1928 not a single outrage occurred, but the authorities had evidence that the conspiracy still existed.

In 1928, 1929 and 1930 revolutionary crime again



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appeared first in the Punjab and later in the United Provinces and Bengal. In the Punjab Mr. Saunders, Assistant Superintendent of Police, and Head Constable Chanan Singh were murdered in 1928. A bomb was thrown in the chamber of the Legislative Assembly in Delhi, and a venerable and highly respected Indian legislator was wounded by a fragment, but fortunately not seriously. A Mills grenade exploded in the midst of a crowd returning to Lahore from the celebration of the Dasehra festival. An attempt was made to wreck the Viceroy's train near Delhi in December 1929.

This was a dastardly crime directed against a Viceroy who had been the mouthpiece of the renewed declaration of the intention of the British Government to assist India in achieving self-government, and had exerted himself to find a solution of the communal problem which rendered that achievement so difficult. The attempt was made by means of a bomb exploded by an electric wire laid underground to an old fort lying some distance back from the line. The railway line was very carefully guarded by the Police, who were posted along the whole route in such a way that no part of the track was not under observation. The track had also been patrolled by police and railway officials for two days before the viceregal train passed over it. Knowing that these precautions would be taken, the conspirators had made their arrangements and placed the wires long beforehand. The explosion did not wreck the train but only damaged the floor of one carriage and killed an Indian servant.

In 1930 the tale of outrages and attempts continued. A terrific bomb explosion occurred in a house in Lahore. One of the principal men 'wanted' in the Saunders murder conspiracy case was accidentally killed by a bomb explosion. A synchronized explosion of booby-trap bombs in six different districts of the Punjab cost the lives of two police officers and caused injury to several others. An attempt was made to assassinate Khan Bahadur Sheikh Abdul Aziz, District Superintendent of Police, who was engaged in the investi-

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gation of political crime. An attempt was made on the life of the Governor of the Punjab, and cost that of a sub-inspector who was present and received a bullet in the head. The culprits in several of these cases and in others in which armed terrorists were arrested, bombs were thrown at police officers or robberies were committed, were brought to trial. The Punjab Criminal Procedure Act, 1930, was passed on the lines of the legislation which had proved effective in Bengal; and those concerned in the principal cases above mentioned came before a special tribunal appointed under that Act.

The Congress declared for Independence on the 1st of January 1930, and, as was only to be expected, the result was widespread disorder all over India. The agitators seized on every existing cause of discontent among the people and exploited it for the benefit of Congress. Economic distress, the relations between landlord and tenant, trade depression, grievances regarding land-taxes or water-taxes, real or imaginary religious grievances, all came as grist to the mill. The exhortation to break the salt laws or the forest laws naturally led to a mentality favouring the breaking of other laws. Crowds of irresponsible youths, worked up into a fury by unscrupulous agitators, attacked loyal citizens who refused to be overawed. The Police and the magistrates were often subjected to hostile and derisive demonstrations. In the face of filthy abuse and threats they carried themselves admirably and acted with wonderful restraint.

Serious rioting occurred all over India. At first the riots were mostly political, but some of the most difficult to control were grave outbreaks between Hindus and Mahomedans. The fabric of civilization began to tear. Large numbers of Hindus were butchered in Sind and elsewhere by Mahomedans. Large numbers of Mahomedans were slaughtered at Cawnpore and elsewhere. Police were murdered by mobs at Sholapur, Panwell and elsewhere. It was only the staunchness of the Indian Police which prevented

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India from falling into a bottomless pit of disaster and chaos.

The central action of the Congress was the march to the sea to break the salt law, and the 'non-violent' raiding of the salt depot at Darasna in Gujerat. The staging of these 'non-violent' mass demonstrations in a land so prone to rioting and violence betrayed an extraordinary lack of a sense of realities. It led to an outbreak of violence almost immediately in several places.

In Madras City a hartal was started on the 22nd April 1930. In the morning bands of Congress workers went about the streets attempting to induce shopkeepers by threats and violence to close their shops. A large procession of mill-hands, who were then on strike, was soon joined by bands of hooligans. The worst elements started to attack some of the shops, and a threatening situation rapidly developed.

Sub-Inspector Ghulam Mahomed Mohazir collected a small force of one head constable and twelve constables and delivered a prompt and determined lathi charge which was instrumental in dispersing the hooligans and preventing further developments. A more serious disturbance broke out on the 27th when a troop of mounted police and 200 foot police were faced with the task of clearing the Beach of an angry and violent mob of 10,000 persons. This was done by a series of lathi charges after a conflict lasting an hour in which the Police were subjected to a constant shower of stones from the mob. No recourse was made to firing, thanks to the staunchness, discipline and gallantry of the men. The Commissioner of Police was at one time surrounded by a riotous section of the mob, and Inspector Chelladurai who was sent to his assistance was stabbed in the back but stuck to his duty. Among other officers who received the Police Medal for gallantry on this occasion was Rao Bahadur Venkatappa, Assistant Commissioner.

At a later stage the Police were compelled to fire seven rounds before the mob was finally dispersed and peace restored. For the remainder of the year there was no serious

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rioting in Madras City, but there were several riots in different parts of the Presidency.

There was no serious disturbance in Bombay in 1930 arising out of the civil disobedience demonstrations, but isolated police officers were assaulted on various occasions. Crowds several hundred strong assembled almost every week from April to September to disobey some provision of the law or an order of the Commissioner of Police. Theatrical and even hysterical performances were staged in the public streets, when large crowds, chiefly composed of banias from Gujerat, invited the Police to disperse them but never waited for them to charge home. A few unemployed were usually hired to sit on the road and receive a blow or two, so that they might be picked up by Congress ambulances with much clanging of bells and copious bandages to cover imaginary wounds. Huge casualty lists were then telegraphed all over the world with the evident intention of impressing 'world opinion'.

These performances gave the Police no rest for over six months. Cordons two or three hundred strong were formed almost every week to prevent the crowds from having access to the salt works or some other place where they had decided to 'break the law'. Smaller demonstrations were also organized almost daily. All these affairs were on a small scale at first, but after it had been stated in the Press that the authorities were unwilling to use force against passive resisters, the crowds grew rapidly larger. The Marathas and the Mahomedans, two of the largest communities in Bombay, held aloof from this movement.

In other parts of the Bombay Presidency, where the agitators stirred up more inflammable material, police officers were murdered or narrowly escaped with their lives on various occasions.

In Calcutta the civil disobedience movement created a dangerous situation which lasted for weeks on end, and subjected the Police of all ranks to an incessant strain. Serious rioting occurred in the early stages. Among the

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officers who distinguished themselves in critical situations were Inspector Adamson, who arrested a number of picketers and was attacked by a large and vicious crowd, but withdrew in good order with his prisoners. On another occasion Sergeant Burr rescued a brother officer who had been thrown to the ground and was attacked by a determined mob of hooligans and was in imminent danger of being killed.

At Bhagalpur in Bihar and Orissa, Mr. Hill, the District Superintendent of Police, went to enforce the order of a magistrate prohibiting the opening of a market by Congress volunteers, whose object was to harass a Mahomedan. Not expecting resistance, he went accompanied only by Rai Sahib Jagdeo Prasad, an officer of the Military Police, and two constables carrying lathis. On their arrival a pre-concerted attack was made on them, and Mr. Hill was stunned by a blow on the head. The Rai Sahib was repeatedly struck, but kept the crowd at bay, disabling their leader and one or two others. Though bleeding from two scalp wounds, he continued to defend himself and his officer, protecting the latter from a severe blow on the head by warding it off with his arm. He saved Mr. Hill's life by his unflinching courage and his utter indifference to pain, and enabled the small party to force their way back to their car. Later he assisted the reinforcements which arrived and only ceased from his exertions, to have his wounds dressed, on a definite order from the District Superintendent.

The serious rioting which took place in Peshawar in April 1930, when four armoured cars were attacked by a city mob, has received considerable publicity. On this occasion Inspector Bashir Ahmad Khan came to the rescue of Lieutenant Syngé of the Royal Tank Corps, who was attacked by a powerful rioter, and undoubtedly saved his life. The man had got hold of the officer's automatic pistol and was trying to twist it round so as to shoot him with his own weapon. The Inspector closed with him and received a bullet in the left hand and thigh.

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For month after month, when they were not dealing with serious and open rioting, the Police in India were subjected to constant strain in the face of mass demonstrations throughout the greater part of 1930. They were frequently on duty for days almost without relief. At the same time there were occasional episodes when they had to deal with armed terrorists.

One of the men who was wanted in the Lahore conspiracy case was seen on the evening of the 1st November 1930 in Delhi by a plain-clothes patrol. Constable Mahomed Afzal, who happened to be returning from duty at the time in uniform, at once gave chase. He was armed only with a baton. The man fired at him, the first shot hitting him in the abdomen and bringing him to his knees. In spite of this, Mahomed Afzal recovered himself in the face of continued firing, resumed the pursuit, felled his assailant with his baton—a miserable little weapon—and captured him with his pistol.

In October 1930 Mr. Nott-Bower was appointed to a special post in the C.I.D. with the duty of tracking down the absconding accused in the Lahore and other conspiracy cases. On the 27th February 1931, Thakur Bisheshar Singh, Deputy Superintendent of Police, informed Mr. Nott-Bower that he had seen three men in the Alfred Park at Allahabad, one of whom he thought was Azad, one of the most notorious of the absconders. He personally kept them under observation; and Mr. Nott-Bower immediately on receipt of the information went to the park with a few men, and, seeing two of the suspects, went straight up to them and asked who they were. For answer they both drew revolvers and fired at him: but he fired first and hit Azad in the leg. This disconcerted Azad, whose shot missed. Mr. Nott-Bower and his men then fired several shots 'rapid', hitting Azad in the leg and in the lung. Azad's companion, after firing several shots at Mr. Nott-Bower, all of which missed, managed to escape. At this point Mr. Nott-Bower, having exhausted his magazine, stooped to reload it, when a shot from Azad passed



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through his left arm, causing him to drop the magazine. He was thus left unarmed and took refuge behind a tree, while Azad crawled behind another tree and kept up a continuous fire. Meanwhile, Thakur Bisheshar Singh ran up behind a hedge in order to outflank Azad, but was seen and also exchanged shots with him until his pistol jammed after the fifth shot. He then started to go back for reinforcements, when he was hit in the jaw by one of Azad's bullets. In spite of being severely wounded, he made his way to the lines, where he found that the men had already left. He then returned to the scene of the encounter, to find that a constable had succeeded in shooting Azad dead.

These are only a few typical instances of the many encounters between the Police and crowds of the riotous followers of the 'non-violent' movement or the revolutionaries. During this year a large and growing section of the public seemed to be ceasing to regard political assassination with horror. Propaganda from the platform and the Press in favour of those executed for murder was undoubtedly responsible for this. Even the accused in the Lahore conspiracy case contrived to contribute to propaganda in favour of those convicted of offences of a political nature by professing solicitude regarding their treatment, by hunger-striking and by adopting every possible expedient to defeat justice and delay the proceedings. Action of this kind, which became common among political prisoners, had to be met by an Ordinance enabling a Court to proceed with the hearing of a case in the absence of an accused person who deliberately impeded the proceedings by hunger-striking or otherwise.

This political excitement naturally led to an increase of ordinary crime, but in most provinces the increase was far less than might have been expected. At the same time the worldwide depression, by limiting the purchasing power of millions, created conditions favourable to unrest.

The Communist leaders in Europe have repeatedly declared that it was their object to arouse among the 'toiling



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masses'—to quote their jargon—of the East discontent with the prevailing conditions of life. This was to be a first step towards inculcating the principles of Communism. The public in India were inclined to attach very little importance to Communist agitators, even after the Cawnpore conspiracy case of 1924 had made public the methods employed and the general nature of the propaganda. There was a tendency in some quarters to discount the evidence and to regard Communism as a bogey of the 'bureaucracy' or as the fatuous occupation of a few unimportant agitators who could make a living in no other way.

After the visit of Allison, *alias* Campbell, and Spratt to India, the local agitators were able to improve the technique of their work and to secure a greater hold over discontented workers on the railways and in the jute and cotton industries. The result was a number of strikes for which there was no economic basis; and these strikes were often prolonged without any justification or any hope of advantage accruing to the workers.

On various occasions the Police came into conflict with these strikers on their becoming violent, as happened on the railways in the Madras Presidency and in Bombay in connexion with the mill strike in 1929. While these strikes continued to give great satisfaction in Communist circles in Europe, they produced a certain change of feeling among the limited public which has capital invested in industrial enterprises in India. The arrest of over thirty persons alleged to be connected with Communist propaganda in April 1929 was therefore welcomed by Indian capitalists as well as by the moderate Trade Union leaders, who had found their influence undermined by the Red Flag agitators.

An Indian named M. N. Roy, who was living in Moscow, took a leading part in the organization of Communist propaganda in India. He returned to Bombay in 1931 on a secret mission; but was arrested on arrival, prosecuted and convicted. Apart from the limited results obtained in the way of these somewhat ineffective strikes, the campaign

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which he had conducted on behalf of the Communist International had had little success. Few if any of the indigenous agitators were really Communists or understood the doctrines of Marx and Lenin. All they had learned was a rough-and-ready technique which enabled them to secure control of the Trade Unions and to stampede the workers into striking on ill-considered grounds.

According to the views expressed in a debate in the Legislative Assembly, orthodox Hinduism is fully confident of its power to resist any threatened encroachments by Communist thought.

Some of the so-called Communists are, perhaps, merely professional agitators and some are 'nationalists' in disguise, but nearly all of them are what the Russians call 'bourgeois'. The 'nationalists' of the Congress party sought to obtain control of the labour movement as they sought to obtain control of every other movement.

The latest and most astonishing phase of the 'nationalist' movement in Bengal is the employment of women to murder British officials. How is it possible to fill gentle Indian women with such blind hatred? How are they induced to murder or attempt to murder a man like Sir Stanley Jackson? What, at this stage of Indian affairs, is the motive for working on young women to commit these crimes?

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE WORK OF THE IMPERIAL SERVICE

**I**T MUST be repeated with emphasis that the foregoing chapters, in so far as they contain a catalogue of crimes, give an entirely wrong impression of the life of India as a whole. By a similar concentration on criminal affairs it is possible to give a similarly wrong impression of the life of any country.

These chapters do not even exhibit in true perspective the life of the countryside as it appears to the District Superintendent of Police, compelled though he is to concentrate on the study of crime and criminals in his daily work. In the first place, he is intimately concerned with the efficiency of the Police Force of his district and therefore interested in everything which goes to improve their training, their *esprit de corps* and their success in dealing with the various problems arising out of the many-sided aspects of their work.

The sepoys must be disciplined and trained to perform their beat and patrol duties and to deal with riots and dacoity, and the Sub-Inspectors must be fit to control and lead them. The investigating officers must be guided in their work, and their cases must be watched to see whether they are properly prepared and presented in Court. Special arrangements must be made to assist them in dealing with any important outbreak of crime, and the general question of police supervision over habitual criminals requires constant attention. Energetic and able men must be encouraged, and laggards must be given a touch of the spur. Corrupt or inefficient men must be watched, and action must be taken to remove them from the public service or relegate them to positions suited to their abilities. All these matters require unremitting care and attention to detail and the exercise of

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patience and judgement. A double aim must always be kept in view—to be just to individual subordinates and to neglect nothing, to shirk nothing which is demanded in the interests of the public or will promote the efficiency of the Police Force. These are, of course, ideals; but they are ideals which the majority of the officers of the Imperial Service have kept steadily in view, and, on the whole, very successfully attained.

The District Superintendent of Police does not only come into contact with the people of his district through matters strictly connected with crime and criminals. The country people of India are very fond of fairs. There are large fairs which attract the people in their thousands and tens of thousands all over India. These are mainly religious in origin, but they naturally develop a considerable commercial importance. Some are held once in seven or once in three years and others are held annually. The enormous crowds of rustics and townspeople thoroughly enjoy themselves on these occasions, and the life of the big gatherings is very animated and varied. Special police arrangements have to be made both to deal with the crowds and to deal with the criminals who come to reap a rich harvest by picking pockets, running gambling booths and by cheating the ignorant or unsuspecting holiday-maker. Small local fairs are also frequently held at several places in most districts, some being the occasion of sales of cattle, horses or camels. In those parts of the country where horses are bred for Army remount purposes, or, as among the Baluchis, the Rajputs or the people of Kathiawar, for the use of local zemindars and chiefs, horse shows of varying degrees of importance are held. These are always the occasion of gatherings to watch a wrestling match or a troupe of travelling acrobats or local buffoons. The officials—British and Indian—take part in these affairs in various ways, judging or buying horses, acting as referees at wrestling matches and so on. In some places there are local horse races—the Baluchis run a three-mile race. In some there are chiefs and others who enjoy a game of polo, or a drive for big or small game, and invite the civil

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and military officers of the station to join them. There is also any quantity of shooting to be had in nearly all parts of India, and an officer on tour can usually take a gun out and bring home a few partridges after an evening stroll. He will always find some of the village lads only too keen to accompany him, and it is always interesting and amusing to get into conversation with them and learn something of local affairs in an unofficial way.

Hog-hunting and tiger or panther shoots are matters of great local importance, and the country people turn out in considerable numbers to act as beaters and to join in the excitement. When an officer is on tour, the local zemindars and grandees often take the opportunity to organize a drive for pig or deer in the jungle, many of them being very keen horsemen and good shots.

As he moves about his district, the officer of the Imperial Service sees unrolled before him all the pageant of the history of mankind. The primitive hunter passes his camp with his nets and snares, and will come out with him to look for quail or partridge and take a special delight in seeing a hare bowled over. He will join in the pursuit of bigger game, and drive the boar for the hog-hunter's spear; and deer, panther or tiger for the double-barrelled rifle. The wild mountaineer joins him in stalking ibex or markhor. The nomadic shepherd in the foothills or the grazier in the plains moves about in search of the best pasture. The fisherman plies his boat across the rivers and lakes. The ploughman follows his plough drawn by a team of oxen, buffaloes or sometimes by a camel. The cartman carries his merchandise on a two-wheeled cart behind yoked bullocks. The trader sits in his shop, and the landowner rides abroad over his wide acres. The Brahmin performs his ceremonies in the temple, and the Mullah pronounces his discourse in the mosque.

Thus we rise from the stone age to the ages of aristocracy and priesthood, but the lives of the hunter, the shepherd, the grazier, the fisherman, the ploughman, the carter, and the trader are much as they have been for the last 10,000

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years. Their implements are still primitive—the nets, the boats and their rough tackle, the wooden plough, the clumsy cart with its solid wheels, and the shop of sun-dried bricks are the same as men have used throughout the ages.

The picture of India—drawn with a political bias—as pathetic and crushed under a dominant economic system is not a true one. It may be more truly pictured as part of the story of mankind in the struggle to master the forces of Nature with primitive weapons.

The mechanical age has lately brought new weapons. This age, with its steel ploughs, its electric telegraph, its railways, its cheap goods from Birmingham or Germany and its motor-buses, still plays but a small part in the life of the countryside, in spite of the revolutionary changes it has brought and is now bringing.

The District Superintendent of Police is concerned in some way with all these people. The country people greet him with a friendly and respectful salutation, and are always ready to discuss the affairs of their limited horizons. Sometimes one of them, meeting him on the road, will stop and demand the redress of a grievance, or complain that he has been robbed and the Police have done nothing about it. People of all classes come to his office at headquarters or to his camp to present petitions—about disputes likely to lead to bloodshed, about stolen cattle or goods, about murder unavenged, or about the hundred and one things which touch the Police and the life of the people.

According to the ancient Hindu traditions, as embodied in the edicts of Asoka in 250 B.C.—and still standing on stone pillars in different parts of the land which was under his dominion—the King should always be accessible to the people and ready to hear complaints and redress grievances. The Indian peoples regard the police officer as performing some of the most important of the functions of the King. The King to-day lives in a far-away island, and the *Kalkata sahib* (the Collector or District Magistrate) and the *Captan sahib* (the District Superintendent of Police) are his viceroys. They

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treat them accordingly, and expect them to be always ready to hear complaints and redress grievances. Their attitude constantly creates an atmosphere which seems to suggest the spirit of the people pleading for the sharp, swift action of the autocrat. For the ancient Laws of Manu, which go back to the beginnings of civilization in India, show that the King was always an autocrat, whose chief function was to punish evildoers. They said, 'If the King were not to punish the guilty, the strong would roast the weaker like a fish on a spit.'<sup>1</sup> Hundreds of years later, the great King Asoka, while insisting on accessibility on the part of the King and his representatives, also attached the greatest importance to the prompt administration of justice.

The District Superintendent of Police thus lives in two worlds. On the one hand is the official world created by the British in India under the Rule of Law, which is the tent-pole of democracy. On the other hand is the world of the Indian peoples demanding the justice of the autocratic King. To the Western mind the Indian idea of constant accessibility for the redress of grievances is unpractical. It is opposed to the smooth working of the administrative machine. The Indian does not so much value regularity of procedure as want a ruler, before whom he can present himself to demand justice.

So every day petitioners present themselves before the District Superintendent of Police—as they do before other officials—and he must compromise as best he can between the demands of the two worlds. He must endeavour to satisfy the demand for justice, and he must play his part in the working of the westernized machine.

He must be ready, like the knight in the Arthurian legend, to take horse and arms and rid the land of robbers; but he also knows that single-handed effort counts for little compared with the work of the organized forces of the realm.

In spite of everything which has been written—and much more could be added to it—about dacoit hunts and special

<sup>1</sup> Elphinstone's *History of India*.



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police operations, the work of the Police consists mainly of routine. The painstaking, unceasing, accurate work of each unit in the great machine counts for more in the long run than spectacular expeditions and brilliant but spasmodic efforts. To say this is no disparagement of the many courageous actions which are recorded in the annals of the Indian Police. They have incalculable moral and practical value, but by themselves they would achieve little unless they had as a background the immense labour of daily routine, and the solid results of that labour.

Excitement and adventure come only occasionally to the Police in most districts. Conditions have been abnormal, however, since 1914, and even more so since 1918; and that abnormality, with its riots and murderous lawlessness, besides being unhealthy for the people has been extremely unpleasant for the Police. Chasing outlaws involves great discomfort, but as an alternative to 'big game' it offers certain compensations. A riot, on the contrary, can give a police officer nothing but anxiety and regrets. Whatever he does and whatever the results, he can derive no satisfaction from its circumstances.

The District Superintendent of Police is responsible, as has been said, for the state of crime in his district. The facts of life stand out with a hard clear outline in an Indian District, and one of the facts which is impressed by experience on all ranks of the Police is that unless an outbreak of serious crime—blood feuds, communal rioting, tribal quarrels, dacoity or even burglary—is met by prompt measures, the situation very quickly gets out of hand. The naked truth of this is a commonplace of everyday life. It is complementary to the demand for the justice of a king.

So long as these were the only factors in the life of a District, that life ran along traditional lines and its problems were simple. Complications were introduced by the spread of English education and of English legal and political ideals, by the increase in the numbers of English-speaking lawyers and journalists, by the development of local self-government

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in the towns. These changes did not minimize the essential police problems. They did not touch the classes prone to violence and crime, except to facilitate their escape from the legal consequences of their deeds.

The greatest satisfaction a District Superintendent of Police can have, is, of course, to see his district quiet and his policemen contented and pulling at the harness. To secure that, he must be prepared to set an example of diligence by night and by day, and to give close and unremitting attention to an infinitude of detail. If he lets the pebble of indifference drop on the quietest surface, he must expect to see the ripples slowly extending to unknown horizons. To most men work is its own reward: and the head of a Police Force cannot but be conscious that his own individual efforts have a tremendous effect on the work of his subordinates. So if the whole machine works well, it must be a matter of legitimate satisfaction to him.

There was once a District Superintendent of Police whose amiability endeared him to all who met him. He worked very hard, but never got anything done; and his sepoy always spoke of him affectionately as 'Daddy'. After a time they ceased to take much interest in the doings of criminals or their own appearance in uniform, and a note of contempt crept into their word 'Daddy'. Like that of the German boy who failed to have his hair cut, this is a nursery story for the education of the young.

One of the best-known and ablest officers in the Service was Mr. Beaty of the Punjab Police. It was commonly said of him that in early life he had inspired the classic story of *Kim*. He had a perfect command of several languages, and a manner which made him master of the situation in his dealings with the two greatest gentlemen in Asia—a Pathan Sardar and a General Officer Commanding a Division. He was 'the Policeman' at Quetta for many years, and acquired a knowledge of the Frontier and an influence with men of all the races which forgather there—British, Pathans, Baluchis and Hindus—which can only be described as

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unique. Nothing of importance happened in the humblest house in the bazaar, or across the Frontier, or in innermost Asia, but he knew all about it. All policemen were his brothers; his readiness to help them and his hospitality knew no bounds. Young policemen who came up to Quetta for a respite from the terrors of Sind and the Punjab in the hot weather were entertained without stint, and, if they wished, most generously and efficiently initiated in the mysteries of Pushtu and Baluchi.

On one occasion a Pathan who was concerned in the gun-running trade between the Persian Gulf and the lands of the Pathans, committed the indiscretion of passing through Quetta on his way to the Persian Gulf with 10,000 rupees in notes concealed about his person. This was not long in coming to the ears of 'Beaty Sahib', and as the British Navy and the Punjab Police were interested in the doings of this individual, at the two extremities of his journeyings, he was searched. When the notes had been recovered from the soles of his boots and the lining of his sheepskin coat, he was requested to see the District Superintendent of Police. There was, of course, no evidence to connect him with gun-running, and no ground for confiscating his money, although there was no moral doubt that it was intended to buy rifles by illicit means.

'Do you mind telling me', said Beaty, 'what you intend doing with this money?'

Without any hesitation the Pathan replied that he was going to Sind to buy pomegranates. Ten thousand rupees' worth of pomegranates! After a little consideration he specified a few other products of the earth.

'My friend,' said Beaty, 'you are my guest. Pray do not disturb yourself by a long and troublesome journey to that misbegotten land of Sind. It is a vile place. Rest yourself in comfort here in Quetta, while I send someone down to effect all your purchases at a more favourable price than you can hope to secure.'

The gun-runner protested vehemently, but dared not

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change his statement as to his intentions. Beaty insisted and, in due course, sent him back with a *kafila*—a long string of camels—laden with the good things of the earth—and mostly pomegranates.

If this story is not true, then Rumour has lied in every Mess in Asia.

Every traveller who passed through Quetta and wrote a book or a diary, necessarily included in it some anecdote of the ubiquitous activities of 'Beaty of the Police'—and so French and German staff officers have carried his name to Paris and Berlin. Whether the *Kim* legend is true or not, his name is linked in the memories of thousands as a 'friend of all the world'.

It is certain that no man ever became a great policeman without an infinite capacity for taking pains. Flashes of inspiration are apt to lead him into dangerous bogs unless he has made a minute study of all the ground and carefully measures every step. It may be conceded, however, that an occasional flash is helpful when it is pitch dark. These arguments apply most obviously to the detective.

The District Superintendent is not as a rule called upon to display detective skill. His work is essentially to superintend. For this purpose he is expected to visit the scenes of important crimes to superintend the work of his detective officers. His other most constant duty is to inspect his police stations and their staffs. In the hot weather he stays at his headquarters and superintends the training, drill and musketry of the Armed Police. The majority of the Armed Police are provided with muskets whose effective range is 100 yards, but a small rifle squad has to be trained to hit a dacoit at 200 yards or more. Inspectors and sub-inspectors have to be put through a revolver course. Parades start early, at 6 a.m., in the hot weather, and are followed by hours of office routine which may last all through the heat of the day and well into the afternoon. The policeman cannot count on a siesta even on the hottest day.

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In most parts of India the shade temperature during several months goes up to 105 degrees Fahrenheit; 115 degrees is quite common; and in Northern India and Sind even higher temperatures are recorded for prolonged periods. Under these conditions the brain does not work as easily for hours at a stretch as it does in a temperate climate.

If routine work in headquarters is unpleasant at these temperatures—and every headquarters in the plains is the City of Dreadful Night—long treks out to remote villages to visit the scene of a murder or a dacoity, with only a mud hut for shelter, are beyond the power of language to describe. Once, twice, sometimes four or five times a month, the average District Superintendent has to go out on this duty. Very often there is no accommodation of any kind at the village where the offence took place, and witnesses must be examined in a low-roofed stifling dwelling or shed, where, even under the draught created by a small straw *punkha*, or fan, the native of our cold Atlantic isles oozes for hours on end at every pore.

The Inspector explains the results of the police investigation as far as it has gone. The witnesses are brought in and told to repeat their story before the sahib. Someone is lying, and the motive for the murder is not quite clear. The local landowner comes in, and opens the conversation with polite irrelevancies and a quotation from Hafiz or Sadi, or a Persian proverb—but these old-fashioned gentlemen are now becoming extinct, and the new generation of landowners has learned English and has less of the classics. After half an hour's circumlocution it appears that he can send for someone who can throw more light on this murder. The man is sent for, but will take an hour to come. After more desultory talk the District Superintendent goes carefully through all the papers, the inquest report, the record of the finding of a bloodstained knife belonging to the accused, the records of some previous dispute between the deceased and the accused. Outside in the sun the temperature is beginning to approach boiling point. The water in the rough earthen

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pots is tepid, but the Indians drink it freely. The Englishman does not feel confident that he is sufficiently immune from typhoid and similar diseases to drink unboiled water, so he has brought two bottles of soda wrapped in damp straw. He drinks one and it pours out of his skin immediately, and he is just as thirsty as before. He, in his turn, quotes the local doggerel: 'Tho Sehwan o Siwi sakhta, duzakh cho parda-khta?' ('Thou madest Sibi and Sehwan, what need to have created hell?') Everyone agrees—and sympathizes. The landowner caps it with another. The Inspector starts to tell a story. At last the fresh witnesses come and tell their story—taking their time to come to the point. The case is gradually pieced together. The Englishman finishes his last soda—and begins to feel appallingly thirsty. He has four miles to ride—in this terrific sun—to the little bungalow at the taluka headquarters, where he must spend an unpleasant night. The murder inquiry has taken up the whole of one day, and he counts himself lucky that it did not take three or more. Early the next morning he must start before sunrise and ride twenty miles to catch a train, which will take him to his own headquarters—and arrears of office work—by midday. Such is a simple investigation in the hot weather, and most cases are far from being so easy.

The District Superintendent of Police is expected to visit the scene of all murders, dacoities, highway robberies by night, and other cases, if of special importance.

The investigation of a dacoity always involves most strenuous work for all the officers concerned in it. There is the actual following of the tracks as far as they can be taken—the tracks before the dacoity as well as those after it—and there are inquiries to be made in widely separated places. If, as usually happens, the identity of the gang is not known from the beginning, it may take several days and much travelling before it is established.

The District Superintendent has to travel by many different conveyances in different parts of India. Elephants, camels, police horses, carts drawn by trotting bullocks, traps



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drawn by ponies, old-fashioned landaus and phaetons are among the various means of reaching the scene of a crime. In recent years these things have mostly been superseded by the motor-car. The performances of four-cylinder cars over roadless country have to be seen to be believed, but there is still a great deal of country where a car cannot be taken, or can only be taken at the risk of leaving it stranded a two days' journey from any hope of repairs or spare parts.

As soon as the hot weather is over, the District Superintendent of Police, like the other district officers, starts out on a tour of inspection. The climate in the North of India is then as good as any climate in the world and better than most. Nearly all officers look on the touring season in an Indian district as one of the pleasantest experiences in life. It involves extra work, as all the ordinary daily routine has to be gone through, in addition to the inspection.

It takes from four to six days to inspect a police station. The records are all examined and checked in detail by the Reader and one of the clerks who accompany the District Superintendent on tour. The drill and kit have to be inspected, and, where there is a detachment of the Armed Police, they have to be put through a practice in musketry. The record of each constable and head constable has to be carefully examined, and the man himself tested as to his fitness for promotion. Reports against him have to be considered, and he has to be given an opportunity to make any representation he may wish to place before the officer who controls his destiny and may make remarks on his record which will decide whether he ends his days as a constable or in the higher ranks.

The most important question to be considered at the inspection of a police station is whether the Sub-Inspector in charge of it is administering it properly and doing everything possible to keep crime and criminals under control. Experience proves that some police stations in every district are far more difficult to control than others. It is therefore necessary to post the most able officers to the most difficult charges.



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Experience proves, again, that one officer will be successful in a difficult charge, where another, equally good to all appearances, has failed.

The District Superintendent has to study all these and cognate questions and find out when things are going wrong, and, if so, what the reason may be. This is a matter of 'touch', and an officer only acquires the sense of 'touch' by experience, and then only provided that he has the right qualities. He must know the language and understand the people. He learns much that is very useful in enabling him to weigh the character of his sub-inspectors by watching their behaviour with witnesses and others during the investigation of murders, dacoities and similar crimes. He learns something from the attitude of their subordinates and their equals, and from that of the local landowners, village headmen and others. In the parts of India where the zemindari system prevails, the landowners are as a rule very ready to assist in police inquiries and investigations. The more important of them have always made a point of making the acquaintance of the chief officers of the district, and they are very punctilious about calling on them when they come on tour. By keeping in touch with the local people, the District Superintendent has an important means of keeping his finger on the pulse of his district. Where an officer stays for some years in one district or one group of contiguous districts, his opportunities for making and preserving these contacts are, of course, greatly increased. Frequent transfers have too often had a contrary tendency.

The question of corruption among the subordinate police is one of the most difficult with which the District Superintendent has to deal. Occasionally he obtains evidence that a sub-inspector or a constable has been guilty of receiving a bribe, but such cases are rare. On the other hand, Indian witnesses have asserted in evidence before various bodies that the subordinate police are generally corrupt. For instance, the Royal Commission on the Police in 1902-3 had a good deal to say on the subject. Evidence before various other

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committees of inquiry has been even more outspoken. While some of this has possibly been due to personal bias or exaggeration, it cannot be denied that there has been a good deal of truth in it.

There is, however, reason to believe that there has been a general improvement in the last two or three decades. It has been noticed, for instance, that a slight lowering or raising of the pay of the lowest ranks retards or encourages the flow of recruits. Conversely, the lowering of pay leads to an increase, and the raising of it to a decrease, in the number of resignations. It is a fair inference that the extent to which the lowest ranks supplement their pay by illegal gratifications is very limited. In the more important matters of criminal administration, the prosecution and detection of serious crime, it is beyond question that there is no regular system of graft such as is said to flourish in some countries.

In some cases a police officer can make opportunities for illegal gratifications in a ridiculously easy way. It was commonly reputed, for instance, that a few years ago some inveterate gamblers used to pay a police sergeant in Bombay a large sum merely to walk past a place where gambling was going on. His appearance led to an expectation of a raid and altered the odds in favour of the man who paid him. Gambling and other acts which are not repugnant to the conscience of large sections of the public, when penalized by a law which does not command general respect, inevitably become a cause of corruption among the guardians of the law. For this reason the highest police authorities must always deprecate legislation which is not based on the conscience of the majority of the public. In recent years a certain number of subordinate British police officers as well as Indians have been removed from the force on account of corruption both in connexion with gambling and other matters.

A District Superintendent of Police must, therefore, be constantly on the alert to prevent flagrant and, as far as he can, secret abuses of this kind. There are a few bad char-

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acters in every large body of men, but the personal records of the Indian police sepoy show that, in spite of a reasonably high standard of discipline and very exacting duties, the majority of them are able to give satisfaction to their superiors. Many have stainless records for the greater part of their thirty-five years' service. Many earn rewards but no punishments. Those few who earn a long series of punishments, at first find their promotion retarded and later, if they prove incorrigible, are liable to be removed from the Force.

Minor punishments are awarded on the report of an inspector or sub-inspector in the case of men at stations outside headquarters. In the case of the armed police and the unarmed police in the headquarters towns minor punishments are usually awarded at Orderly Room, which is held once a week by the District Superintendent or the Assistant or Deputy. In the case of serious punishments, the proceedings are not summary as at Orderly Room, but evidence is recorded in detail, and the defaulter is given a full opportunity to make his defence. In such cases, where a sub-inspector, head constable or constable is reduced to a lower rank, an appeal against the orders of the District Superintendent lies to the Deputy Inspector-General. The Inspector-General, as the head of the whole Force, has the power of revising these orders, but the exercise of this power is rarely found to be necessary. The responsibility of the District Superintendent for the discipline of his men is real, but the powers of the Inspector-General and his deputies to interfere, if necessary, ensure the maintenance of a general standard in this respect.

It goes without saying that the integrity of an officer in the Imperial Service must be unimpeachable. That this is taken for granted in the British Isles with their very high standards of public service does not alter the fact that the establishment of the Imperial Service with equally high standards in India is one of the great achievements of the British peoples. This achievement, properly understood, is one among many which

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gives the British peoples the right to face the verdict of history in regard to their dealings with India with a high head. They owe no deference to world opinion for they lead the world.

There are 650 officers in the Imperial Service of the Indian Police, of whom some 500 are now British. The names of some who have held the highest appointments, as Inspectors-General and Commissioners of Police in Bombay and Calcutta, are not unknown in their own country.

In the past some made a great reputation in India. One of these was Major Marston, who joined the Sind Police when it was first formed by Sir Charles Napier. He received his share of the credit for the good order maintained in Sind during the disturbances connected with the mutiny of the Bengal Army. His name was legendary among the Baluchis of the Karachi Kohistan. As late as 1912—seventy years after he joined—a party of these rough, bearded hillmen, pointing to a place where he had shot an ibex on the lofty heights of barren Surjano, told one of his successors as District Superintendent of Police at Karachi of his greatness and his fame in his own day.

Another was Sir Frank Souter, who was Commissioner of Police in Bombay for no less than twenty-four years, from 1864 to 1888. During this time the city developed enormously and the foundations of its modern importance and prosperity were laid. Sir Frank Souter guided the Bombay City Police as it also developed on modern lines and won the confidence of the public and high tributes from men like Sir Richard Temple when he was Governor of Bombay. A more remarkable tribute to his greatness is recorded by Edwardes in his history of the Bombay City Police, where he says that, twenty years after Sir Frank Souter's death, he saw an old and grizzled Indian Head Constable turn aside, halt and gravely salute the marble bust of the dead Commissioner in the entrance hall of the Police Head Office.

Sir Frank Souter's was one of the many families which

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have given of their best to India for successive generations. His father, Captain Souter, fought in Afghanistan, and his son, whom we have seen charging Miana outlaws in Kathiawar, became Inspector-General of Police in the Bombay Presidency in 1915.

The important part which the Inspector-General plays in the organization of the Provincial Police Forces was explained in an early chapter. That importance is enhanced when it is remembered that he is, in each province, the head of a great Service of Officers (whose number varies between the 26 in Assam and the 157 in the United Provinces) who look to him for wise counsel and leadership. He is responsible for the maintenance of discipline among them, and on his personal qualities and his relations with them depend the whole tone of the Imperial Service and that of all the Police Forces which they command.

The Commissioners of Police in the presidency capitals fill a special niche. They have all the same responsibilities and the same general problems as the District Superintendents of Police but with a wider scope and a deeper significance. Every aspect of the manifold problems of police administration presents itself vividly and continuously before a Commissioner of Police. We have seen how some of these problems interact—rioting and hooligans; hooligans and burglary; gambling and drugs; crime and convictions; Courts and the law of evidence; detection and police personnel; personnel and discipline; discipline and corruption; pay and training; organization and effectiveness—all these form a closely connected chain. In the case of the Provincial Police Forces there is a certain diffusion of function and responsibility between the District Superintendent, the District Magistrate, the Deputy Inspector-General and the Inspector-General.

Many important matters cannot be dealt with from the point of view of a single district or on the basis of purely local needs. Pay, discipline, organization and criminal matters have to be dealt with as a whole or in view of their extra-local

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bearings or ramifications. In the case of the great cities, however, everything is concentrated. Every problem has sharp outlines. Every official act of the Commissioner, his general and particular policies in regard to police problems, his character, his strong and his weak qualities, all have immense consequences and far-reaching reactions.

Questions of politics and matters of public policy are beyond the scope of the Commissioner of Police. It is his duty to give effect to the policy laid down by the Government in regard to all important matters such as political or communal disturbances, or industrial unrest. The action which he can take in pursuance of the policy laid down in any matter by the Government is circumscribed by his own powers under the law in force at the time. He cannot under any circumstances take any action unless it is covered by a provision of the law. He must perpetually have in mind his responsibilities for the maintenance of order and the limitations of his legal powers. Much of the detailed work of administration is done on behalf of the Commissioner by his deputies, and this implies and necessitates very close touch between him and those officers. He must also be always in close touch with the Divisional Superintendents, who are responsible for carrying out his orders and his policy—within the four corners of the law which also governs all their actions—in their local areas, the divisions.

Among the Inspectors-General and the Commissioners who have earned the distinction of knighthood in recent years are Sir Edward French and Sir Charles Stead, in the Punjab, Sir Douglas Straight in the United Provinces, Sir David Petrie as Director of the Intelligence Bureau, Sir Reginald Clarke and Sir Charles Tegart in Calcutta, Sir Frances Griffith and Sir Patrick Kelly in Bombay.

By the end of August 1914 practically the whole of the Service had volunteered for military duty, but obviously only a very small proportion could be spared. In connexion with the War various officers were employed out of India, chiefly on intelligence work in England, Turkey, Iraq, Persia,



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Singapore, China and elsewhere, and, in addition, the services of nearly 100 were lent to the Army.

Some of the actions which have brought the names of officers of the Imperial Service into the Honours List have been mentioned in previous chapters in connexion with the work of the whole Force. The following selection of a few among the large number of cases will illustrate still further the nature of the diverse situations with which at any time police officers in India are liable to find themselves confronted.

In October 1925 Mr. Sayers, District Superintendent of Police at Bellary in the Madras Presidency, took forty armed police to the village of Uttangi where a riot was anticipated in connexion with a religious procession which had long been the subject of dispute. When passing through the village, the party was suddenly attacked by a mob from behind, and showers of stones were thrown at them from the housetops. Several were hit, and Mr. Sayers had to carry a constable into safety. In spite of the very threatening attitude of the mob, Mr. Ayyangar, the Deputy Superintendent, and Mr. Biddiah, the Inspector, made every effort to induce them to disperse, and continued their attempts though exposed to a heavy fusillade of stones. Mr. Sayers was finally obliged to order them to retire behind the armed police and to open fire on the mob as they were about to rush the Police. He then moved out of the village in order to prevent the procession from advancing, and found himself obliged to interpose the Police between the procession and a mob of about 2,000 which came from the village with the intention of attacking it. He extended his forty armed police and a few unarmed police under the Inspector, and skilfully frustrated the attempts of the mob to outflank him, while the mob and the processionists hurled challenges at each other and from time to time attempted to come to grips. To prevent this, he fired a few shots into the field between them, and the Deputy Superintendent, in spite of having received two severe scalp wounds, continued his endeavours to induce the mob to disperse. Finally, the Inspector led the unarmed police among



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them and the excited people were gradually brought under control and persuaded to abandon their bellicose intentions.

In May 1926 Mr. Prance, District Superintendent of Police at Lahore in the Punjab, was at the town of Pattoki when he learned that a serious disturbance was taking place and that several persons had been injured by a notorious bad character named Karam Singh who was mounted on a horse and had been using a revolver. Mr. Prance and the Deputy Superintendent and Sub-Inspector who were with him at the time dashed off in pursuit of Karam Singh. After running for about a mile, they caught sight of him near a brick kiln. He was mounted on a powerful horse and threatened to shoot anyone who came near him. Mr. Prance crept up to the brick kiln, but there was insufficient cover, and Karam Singh, seeing him coming, raised his revolver to shoot at him. Mr. Prance succeeded in getting in first shot and his bullet, passing close to Karam Singh, hit a pile of bricks behind him and caused his horse to rear and get out of control. Seeing his opportunity, Mr. Prance rushed forward and reached him as some men at the brick kiln succeeded in seizing the horse and bringing the rider to the ground. After a hand-to-hand struggle in which Karam Singh's revolver dropped loaded from his hand, he succeeded in arresting him.

In May 1925 Mr. Hitchcock, District Superintendent of Police of Monghyr in Bihar and Orissa, received information that a clash was imminent between two castes. The attacking party were about 4,000 strong and he had only seventeen armed policemen at his disposal on the spot. When the two opposing forces were about to come into conflict, he interposed his men between them. He did not succeed in preventing a collision but he postponed it, and the delay took the sting out of the attack when it was launched. He handled his men so well, and their confidence in him was such that he was able to effect a retirement for several hundred yards with an extended line without that line being broken, even though at one stage the attacking party got in amongst the Police and one of them actually assaulted Mr. Hitchcock

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himself. Eventually the police action forced the parties to break off the engagement after very necessary but nevertheless restrained firing. The discipline of the Police under Mr. Hitchcock's leadership, and his firmness and promptitude, saved many lives.

In December 1925 Mr. Murphy, Assistant Superintendent of Police in Peshawar—he was killed by the Redshirts in 1930—entered a burning building and, at the risk of his own life, saved that of a boy who was pinned under a fallen beam. The building collapsed a few minutes later.

Mr. Tuni Meerza, who had been promoted to the Imperial Service in 1917, was District Superintendent of Police in Pabna in Bengal in July 1926 when there was a serious outbreak of communal disturbances. He was faced with a very serious situation for two days while waiting for reinforcements, and with a small force had to remain constantly on duty for forty-eight hours to keep the excited populace in check. He handled the situation admirably, and laboured indefatigably in bringing it under control; and by his leadership, energy, coolness and tact prevented the trouble from spreading to the surrounding districts.

A bar to the King's Police Medal is not often earned, but there are probably more instances of this in India than in the Police Forces of other countries in the British Empire. One of these occurred when Mr. Prance led one of two parties in a converging movement at the gallop to capture three Sikh bad characters who were wanted for serious offences and were hiding in some high crops. He galloped into the crops but had to dismount; and found himself looking down the barrels of a gun levelled at him by one of the three. He rushed him and knocked up his gun, throwing the man on top of his companions. In the struggle he contrived to wrench the gun away, and broke it over the head of one of them. Inspector Isher Singh came up and helped to hold down the men who were struggling hard to escape from Mr. Prance, whose action was considered to be one of outstanding fearlessness and gallantry.

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In October 1926 Mr. Herdon, District Superintendent of Police in Ferozpur in the Punjab, learned that a gang of desperate dacoits, who had publicly announced that they would never be taken alive, was in hiding in a certain field. He reached the place in the early morning, accompanied by Mr. Russell, Assistant Superintendent of Police, and a small party of police. In the early light of dawn he picketed the field, and advanced with a few men in order to locate the exact position of the gang. He suddenly came upon them concealed under a large bush with overhanging branches. The nearest man saw him, and at once sat up and reached for his arms. Mr. Herdon immediately fired, and, taking cover with his men a short distance away, called upon the dacoits to surrender. Their reply was a fusillade of shots. He then ordered the Police to fire a volley into the bush, and again called on the dacoits to surrender. Eventually one man came out with his arms above his head, and informed Mr. Herdon that the remainder of the gang were dead. He said that he would produce their firearms, and disappeared into the bush again. A hot fire was immediately opened on the Police, whose position he had ascertained by his ruse, Mr. Herdon and a constable being narrowly missed. The Police then renewed their fire and kept it up until that of the dacoits ceased. Eventually they were all found dead, with a rifle, two revolvers, two shotguns and ample ammunition. They also had a Mills bomb which they had unsuccessfully attempted to use.

Mr. Russell, who was present at the above encounter, was also concerned in two affairs on his own account. During the investigation of a dacoity he was deputed to raid a village and recover some stolen cattle. This raid involved crossing the Sutlej river at night in the middle of January. On arrival at the bank, he found that there was no ferryboat at the ferry. Rather than allow the raid to fail, he entered the ice-cold river, swam across and returned with a boat. This remarkable physical feat enabled the police party to cross and carry out a successful raid at dawn.

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Later, in March 1927, he was searching for a gang of notorious armed criminals in a marsh on the banks of the Sutlej. After some hours' search in the high grass, he heard the sound of a distant shot. He galloped forward for nearly a mile and came upon two men, one of whom was armed with a gun and the other with a spear. The man with a gun, whose name was Labhu, threatened to shoot him if he advanced. He drew his revolver and threatened to shoot Labhu if he did not surrender. Labhu's response was a shot. Mr. Russell emptied his revolver at the man, but his horse was an excitable one and he was not able to hit him. He managed to slip two cartridges into the revolver and exchanged further shots at thirty yards' range, eventually hitting Labhu, who, however, failed to hit him. When the other man found that Labhu was unable to walk and that he could not carry him into safety, he picked up the gun, brutally shot him dead and made off. Mr. Russell started after the murderer and fired his last round at him, but he escaped into thick cover.

Another bar to the medal was granted—posthumously—to Mr. Guise of the Bihar and Orissa Provinces, who originally won the medal for conspicuous gallantry during the dangerous Arrah floods. In April 1926 he was alone in the Inspection Bungalow when he received information that a mob of two or three hundred Hindus was advancing armed with lathis to attack some Mahomedans in the neighbourhood. Having no time to collect a force, he set off in his car accompanied by two orderlies. He found the Hindus advancing along the road and a crowd of Mahomedans gathering to oppose them. Realizing the urgent need to keep the two mobs apart, he got out of his car and, unarmed, attacked the leaders of one of them. He knocked out two men and the remainder then withdrew. The relations between the two communities in that locality were in a state of grave tension at the time, and his prompt action prevented an incident which would have led to further widespread rioting.

Yet another bar was earned by Mr. O'Gorman, District

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Superintendent of Police at Surat in the Bombay Presidency. In September 1928 the Ganpati celebrations in Surat were the occasion of widespread and frenzied rioting between Hindus and Mahomedans, in spite of the most careful precautions which Mr. O'Gorman and his officers had taken to prevent the trouble from coming to a head. Numerous cold-blooded murders were committed by the contesting parties, and Mr. O'Gorman had a number of personal encounters with infuriated rioters armed with lethal weapons. He displayed the greatest courage in dispersing them, and by his resource and ability brought the situation in this important city under control without the use of fire-arms, except on one occasion when the Police were obliged to fire in self-defence.

In August 1928 a gang of Makrani outlaws began to terrorize a large area in Kathiawar. They were eventually located, and a party of Agency Police and Nawanagar State Police were hurried to the spot by car and lorry. The outlaws, who were about seven in number, took up a strong position in the bed of a stream in country which afforded plenty of cover in the shape of bushes and thick scrub. The Police attacked under the leadership of Mr. Edwards, the District Superintendent of Police in command of the Agency Police, and killed two of them. The rest slipped away in the scrub. Mr. Edwards pursued them single-handed and kept in touch with them for some distance, but they eventually got away.

Another bar was awarded to Sir Patrick Kelly, Commissioner of Police in Bombay. During the riots of February 1929 a number of Pathans had been killed by mobs of Hindu hooligans, and the feelings of the former community were inflamed in consequence. A party of them started to attack all whom they met in the vicinity of the Police Head Office, and were belabouring a police constable, when Sir Patrick Kelly rushed in and was splashed with the constable's blood in his endeavours to shield him from their blows. Although the Pathans did not touch the Commissioner, there was no

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reason to suppose that they would spare him in their evident state of temper, and his action saved the constable's life, which was in serious danger from the ferocity of their attack.

In April 1930 simultaneous attacks were made on the Police Lines, the Volunteer Armoury and the Telegraph and Telephone Offices at Chittagong. Hearing of this, Mr. Farmer, the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, immediately proceeded to the Armoury, and, finding the rebels in possession, went to the subsidiary armoury from which he obtained a Lewis gun and a few rifles. He returned to the Volunteer Armoury with two other persons to attack the rebels but found that they had left. He then proceeded to the Police Lines, his party being augmented by another officer who joined him there. Under heavy fire from superior numbers they opened fire with the Lewis gun, whereupon the rebels left the lines and, abandoning their plans for further depredations in Chittagong, made for the hills. There they were pursued by such forces as could be collected, including detachments of the Assam Rifles. During these operations Mr. Farmer, early in May, rounded up a party of six armed rebels and engaged them with a small police party. One of the policemen was killed by the rebels' fire, and four of the latter were killed and the other two captured.

In May 1930 agitation had been worked up against the water-tax levied by the Municipality in Multan in the Punjab. The Municipality took action in the Civil Courts and obtained orders for the attachment of the property of persons who refused to pay the tax. The Police were called in to support the officials whose duty it was to make the attachment, as they were exposed to the hostility of excited crowds and were attacked on several occasions. Mr. Hill, the District Superintendent of Police at Multan, was superintending these arrangements, when a bomb burst at his feet. He received many injuries, including some fifty punctures from pieces of soda-water bottle, glass and nails. He bled considerably but remained cool and calm, and gave orders to the Police which led to the isolation of the buildings



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from which the bomb had been thrown and the eventual capture of the miscreants.

In May 1930 serious rioting took place in Delhi. Mr. Jeffreys, the District Superintendent of Police, was in a position of grave danger on more than one occasion, and while the disturbances were at their height, was in the Kotwali one afternoon when a sudden crisis arose. A lorry containing a party of constables was cut off in the streets near the Kotwali and savagely attacked by an infuriated crowd. Without hesitation he ran out and unarmed led a charge, well ahead of his men, into the midst of the mob. He arrived just in time to save his wounded men from being murdered. After routing the mob he and his force had considerable difficulty in regaining the shelter of the Kotwali, a large proportion of them being injured by missiles hurled at them as they went.

Conditions on the North-West Frontier have always been very different from those in the rest of India. The officers of the Imperial Service of the Indian Police who serve with the Frontier Constabulary are engaged in work which differs considerably from that of administering the Police Force of a normal district. While the protection of the Frontier is a military matter when any of the independent tribes become involved in actual warfare, the function of the Frontier Constabulary is to deal with the lawless raiders who in times of peace and in times of war are likely to cross the Frontier on private filibustering expeditions. The bands of raiders are often large and they are always well armed with modern rifles. Raiders become outlaws, and it is the duty of the Frontier Constabulary to apprehend them. In December 1921 Mr. Andrew was in command of a force of 300 Frontier Constabulary which was sent under the orders of the Chief Commissioner to raid the settlement of Alakki, a famous Bhattani outlaw.

The operation was an extraordinarily risky one owing to the terrain, the inaccuracy of the maps and the lack of



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political information. The force reached its objective before dawn after a hard and trying march. Pickets were placed round three sides of the settlement, which lay at the base of the Kota massif. Firing began at 7.30 a.m., and an engagement continued for some time. It was found to be impossible to capture the settlement. Large enemy parties began to collect and to attack the pickets. Finding that he was unable to attain his object, Mr. Andrew ordered a retirement at 10.30 a.m. Mr. Andrew and Mr. Vickers, the Assistant District Officer, Frontier Constabulary, remained with the rear party. The tribesmen excel in attacking a retreating foe, and in all our frontier campaigns heavy losses have been sustained when expeditions have retreated from the hills. The situation is apt to be particularly dangerous when the object of an expedition has not been attained. Mr. Andrew, who would normally have retreated with the main body, thus chose the most dangerous post and one of critical importance by remaining with the rear. The ground was very broken and intercepted with ravines, making it favourable to the tactics of the enemy. They worked round the flank of the rear party, and during the ensuing engagement Mr. Vickers was severely wounded. Mr. Andrew went to his support and attempted to bring him away, but was himself wounded in the knee. The enemy surrounded the party and shot Mr. Andrew dead.

Mr. Andrew had been very severely wounded two years earlier in an action with Wazirs at Shahidan Darga in the Kohat District; and he now gave his life in an endeavour to save a brother officer and his men.

The name of Handyside, a Commandant of the Frontier Constabulary, was one round which legends were gathering among Pathan and British fighting men even during his lifetime. He was literally fearless: but to say that is only to touch on one of the most obvious qualities which helped to give him a unique reputation. Short and stocky in build, he had inexhaustible powers of endurance and reserves of strength. In the blazing heat of a frontier summer day he would march

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thirty miles on foot and fight a raiding gang at the end of it. Almost every day in 'Handy's' company brought an adventure: raiding an outlaw's village after a long night march and destroying his fortified towers; encountering a gang of Mahsuds returning from a raid into the Punjab; fearlessly exposing himself in an attack on a gang of raiders defying troops and police; or meeting some extraordinary situation as only he could do. His great qualities of leadership won the respect of the frontier tribesmen, to whom the strategy and tactics of border warfare were the breath of life. His actions were as unorthodox as his character; and his wonderful knowledge of the Pathan and his ways was born of affection. The affectionate side to his character attracted strange children or animals, who came up to him at once to be stroked or petted. His ponies would follow him about like dogs.

Those who knew him can tell many a tale of epic achievement. Thus, at the beginning of the Afghan War in 1919, the Mahsud allies of the Afghans besieged a town in Handy-side's district. With a handful of policemen he fought and held off hundreds of Mahsuds. When he and his men were all wounded, a strong band of Afghan nomad traders, subjects of the Amir of Afghanistan, came up across the plain on their way back to their homes for the summer. Such were Handy-side's personality and prestige that he actually persuaded these Afghans to fight for him against the Mahsuds, and, with their help, he held his town until a British column relieved him.

In the end he was killed while leading an attack on a fortified tower defended by two desperate and well-armed men. His funeral was the occasion of a wonderful demonstration of affection and regard on the part of the frontier tribesmen. Lord Reading referred to him in the House of Lords as a man whose exploits recalled the days of Elizabethan chivalry: and over his grave a flight of aeroplanes dipped in salute to one who handed on the torch which comes down to this generation of Englishmen from Drake and Raleigh and Nicholson.

## CHAPTER XIV

### POLICE PROBLEMS AND THE FUTURE

**T**HE FOREGOING chapters contain a slight and all too incomplete sketch of the Indian Police organization, of its gradual growth, and of the various and complex problems with which it has to deal.

The responsibility for the maintenance of law and order and for the control and efficiency of the Provincial Police Forces rests on the Provincial Government in each of the nine provinces. The Inspectors-General, the Commissioners of Police and the District Magistrates receive their executive orders and administrative instructions in all important matters from the Home Department of each Government. The police portfolio is in the hands of the Home Member of each Governor's Council; and the Home Member's functions and responsibilities correspond to those of the Home Secretary in the British Cabinet. Questions relating to the strength, pay and organization of the Police are decided by the Home Department, subject to the limitations imposed by the influence of the Finance Department, and under the general control of the Governor-in-Council. The influence exercised by the Finance Department is analogous to that of the British Treasury, and the general control of the Governor-in-Council to that of the British Cabinet.

The constitutional machinery responsible for law and order in India is more complex than that in Great Britain. The Government of India, while holding the Provincial Government responsible in its local jurisdiction for the conduct of its own affairs, cannot entirely divest itself of responsibility as the agent of the British Government. This responsibility is realized when, at the request of a Provincial Government, the Government of India lends troops to aid the civil

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power, as has happened frequently in Bombay and occasionally in many other places. The Army is entirely under the control and at the disposal of the Government of India, and not under the Provincial Governments.

The complexity of the constitutional, that is of the legal, position is enhanced when it is remembered that the ultimate responsibility rests not with the Government of India, but with the British Cabinet, which is responsible to the British Houses of Parliament.

In view of the obscurity which at the present moment surrounds the future of constitutional developments in India, the future of the Indian Police Forces is equally obscure. Provincial autonomy means that Provincial Governments—consisting of Members of Council who will all be Indians—responsible to elected legislatures will assume responsibility for law and order and for police administration generally. Hitherto the Home Members have usually, but not invariably, been British officers of the Indian Civil Service, while other Members of Council have included British or Indian officials and Indian members of the legislatures.

The Bombay Government, for instance, has consisted, under 'Dyarchy', of the Governor, two British and two Indian Members of Council responsible for 'Reserved Subjects' including law and order; while the Governor acting with three Indian Ministers has been responsible for 'Transferred subjects' such as Education, and Roads and Buildings under the Public Works Department.

Whatever the future Constitution of India may be; whether it is federal or confederate, centralized or regional, aristocratic or democratic; whether it is based on an Indian nationality or on a series of regional nationalities—Pathan, Punjabi, Sikh, Rajput, Maratha, Bengali and others—police problems will remain essentially the same.

The outstanding problems of police administration to-day are rioting and dacoity.

The solution of the problem of communal rioting depends mainly on the political solution of the problems created by

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the existing relations between the two communities. In fundamentals it is a political rather than a police problem.

The suppression or effective control of dacoity, which is one of the most pressing and important aspects of the problem of maintaining law and order, depends primarily on criminals being made to feel that the commission of crime almost certainly leads to conviction. That is not the case at present: and until that is so, the volume of crime will not be effectively controlled by the Provincial Police Forces.

An example from England will illustrate the essentials of this problem.

Before the organized Police Force was established in London by Peel's Act of 1829, graft, blackmail and serious and violent crime were rampant in the Metropolis to an extent which seems incredible to-day. According to Dilnot, it was estimated that there were 8,000 places where stolen goods were received in London, and that robberies and thefts cost the public from £1,000,000 to £2,000,000 annually. No man's life or property was safe. Footpads, burglars and every species of criminal flourished.

The shipping in the great Port of London was not exempt, but was subject to almost open plundering. There were armed river pirates who pillaged vessels lying in the river. There was an immense criminal organization. According to Colquhoun, the Middlesex Magistrate to whom the reformed police system was largely due, something like 5,000 persons employed on the Thames had been brought up from early life in an atmosphere where systematic crime was openly carried on. According to James Grant, 30,000 people lived by thieving in the Metropolis.

The formation of the organized constabulary in the 'thirties was almost immediately followed by orderly conditions, gradually improving until they became such as we have known in our time. Within a few years the amount of property stolen was reduced from over £1,000,000 to £20,000.

These remarkable and very salutary results were due to the

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fact that the organized Police Force made it almost certain that crime would lead to conviction, whereas previously it had been almost certain that it would not.

It is evident that the modern constabulary forces, introduced into India in 1861, have not succeeded in countering ordinary lawlessness in the way that the Metropolitan Police succeeded in England.

Doubts have arisen as to the suitability of the English law of evidence and criminal procedure to Indian conditions. These doubts obtruded themselves from the beginning. They impelled a man like Warren Hastings, fully acquainted as he was with English constitutional practice and procedure, to suggest, with considerable hesitation, that they should be modified in Bengal. He believed that some modification was necessary to enable the administration to meet the age-long menace of dacoity.

These doubts have always been strongly reinforced by the opinion of Indian officers charged with responsibility for curbing the activities of the criminal elements. In certain cases in the Punjab and in Bengal, as we have seen, the ordinary law and procedure have been set aside in a grave emergency.

An obvious solution of these difficulties is suggested by the success attained by the special measures to combat the terrorist organization in Bengal. Similar special measures—special procedure and special tribunals—would immensely facilitate the task of dealing with the dacoit, the burglar, the cattle thief and the pickpocket.

There are, however, very great practical difficulties in the way of such measures. They would excite the hostility of the 'nationalist' mentality, if suggested by the present Government in India. They would invite opposition from legal minds and legal interests if they emanated from any Government. The fact remains that unless some change is made in the law, which will enable the Police to bring criminals to justice more successfully, the problem of repressing lawlessness and crime will baffle the Police, and assume more and

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more dangerous dimensions. This will be the case, whatever the future system, or systems, of government may be.

Whatever the form of the future Constitution of India may be—and this is true within the widest conceivable theoretical limits for such forms—two of the main conditions of stability in India are that the Government should be such as will render the causes of communal friction innocuous or practically innocuous, and that it should be strong enough to repress the spirit of lawlessness. This spirit of lawlessness has found expression—before the days of British administration and in our own time—in the furtive crime of dacoity. Under a weaker administration it would at once develop into open and large-scale plundering, like that of the Pindaris and the *mulk giri* armies of the Marathas.

However incomplete and imperfect the work may be, in creating the present Indian Police Forces the British and the Indians have jointly achieved a miracle. These forces have proved their worth in dealing, under adverse conditions, with the ordinary lawlessness of dacoity, with terrorism, with communal rioting and with the civil disobedience movement.

The bearing of one of the Provincial Police Forces under the supreme tests of 1930 has been described by the Inspector-General of Police in words which are in essence applicable to the Police throughout India:

‘Non-violence was the creed of the Congress, but an orgy of mass violence, which of all kinds is the most blind and brutal, was the fruit of its application. The Police . . . continuously overstrained and overworked, abused in the Press and by the public, often under taunts and insults restrained from action, in the face of all attempts to seduce them from their duty, . . . have emerged from a protracted trial with their duty well and faithfully performed, fortified in their loyalty and with their morale unshaken. They showed through everything an example of courage and loyalty and good discipline of which they may well be proud, and which I trust will long be remembered. To have commanded such a force through such a time has been a high privilege.’



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These Police Forces in all the nine provinces of India are, with the Indian Army and the Indian magistracy, elements making for stability. They are solid material for the builders to use if their architectural design is well based—as an architect's design should be—on a proper estimate of the structural capacities of the material and the firmness of the foundations. An immense responsibility rests on the British Government in England, as the rulers of India, in making their attempt with Indian assistance to devise a stable structure.

The Police Force is, under modern conditions, an essential component part of the Government of a State as the foundation of social order. A question of outstanding importance for the future of India is to find means to secure the Police Force from political intrigue under the conditions of representative government. How important that question can be and how far-reaching are the consequences of a technical fault in constitution-making is obvious from a comparison between the conditions in London and Chicago, or between those in the United States of America and Canada.

While 'graft', 'Tammany', 'bootlegging', gunmen and an appalling death-roll from murder are notorious features in affairs of police in the United States, Canada, with its magnificent Police Force, presents an entirely different picture and can proudly take its place beside the best-ordered countries in Europe. This aspect of life in the United States presents a warning to Indian constitution-makers of the cumulative effects of technical faults in construction, and of the difficulty in the way of a people extricating itself from the consequences once the situation has developed.

Can the political problem arising from the communal trouble be solved? Can the legislative problem of reforming the law of evidence and the procedure in the courts, including the High Courts, be solved so as to provide a much greater assurance that the guilty will be punished than is the case at present? Can the constitutional problem of isolating the Police from political intrigue be solved?

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These are vital questions for constitution-makers—including Indians—to study. They are questions which must be approached without bias. Since the British Government has made abundantly clear its intention of developing self-governing institutions, there is a great need for a dispassionate consideration of these major problems affecting police administration in India. The Indian Police Force to-day is the outcome of indigenous conditions reacting to an India changing under the influence of modern science and Western thought. In the future it will be even more important to the welfare of the people than it has been in the past, for the development of democratic self-government implies that all classes—politicians, journalists, peasants and traders among the rest—shall recognize that the Police Force is not, in reality, the agent of an autocratic government, but an integral part of their own civic life.

If the major problems—political, legislative, and constitutional, but directly bearing on police administration—can be solved, the special problems relating to blood-feuds, dacoity, cattle theft, the city hooligans and the criminal tribes, while still presenting formidable difficulties, should yield to wisely directed police action.

The constitution-makers, British and Indian, may perhaps usefully ask themselves how Mr. Gokhale—a man of the greatest constructive intellect—would have approached these problems of police administration at the present day? The manner in which Indian political leaders now approach them, and the degree of constructive effort they put into this work, will—if the goal is democratic self-government and not autocratic kingship—have a decisive effect on the future condition of the peoples of India.

# APPENDIX

	Area in sq. miles.	Population in Millions.	Sanctioned Strength of Police.		Number of Police Stations.	Cases classified as true (1929).		
			Officers.	Men.		Murder.	Culpable Homicide.	Dacoity.
NORTH-WEST PROVINCE (FRONTIER CONSTABULARY)	13,420	2·31	253 (147)	5,518 (3,980)	84	490	108	84
PUNJAB	97,280	20·65	1,285	21,360	491	679	303	99
UNITED PROVINCES	106,290	45·37	2,355	31,260	829	904	365	723
BIHAR AND ORISSA	83,160	34·00	1,350	13,015	540	267	144	214
BENGAL	71,680	45·61	2,130	22,350	652	500	272	693
(EASTERN RIFLES)			(20)	(820)				
ASSAM	52,000	7·56	330	4,050	121	61	113	36
(ASSAM RIFLES)			(96)	(3,800)				
CENTRAL PROVINCES	103,000	13·91	919	10,340	428	279	53	41
ADRAS PRESIDENCY	142,300	42·31	1,913	26,340	1,017	848	166	126
BOMBAY PRESIDENCY	76,800	14·88	712	17,430	350	266	63	136
SIND	48,000	3·27	250	4,850	114	202	96	19
BOMBAY CITY	22	1·17	293	3,850	19	88 <sup>1</sup>	3	4
CALCUTTA	30	1·07	399	5,300	26	18	1	2

NOTE.—The latest figures available are those for the year 1930 (with the new census figures), but that year was so abnormal from the point of view of criminality that the figures for 1929 here given are more useful for purposes of comparison.

<sup>1</sup> This figure is abnormally high as a consequence of the serious communal rioting in Bombay in 1929.



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